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THE POLITICS OF AGRICULTURE: LE MOUVEMENT POUR LA DÉFENSE DE  
L'EXPLOITATION FAMILIAL. 1959-1982

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## SUMMARY

The Mouvement pour la Défense de L'Exploitation Familial (MODEF) was created in 1959 by a group of dissident and former members of the main farmers union, the Federation Nationale des Syndicats d'Exploitants Agricoles (FNSEA). Discontent with the apparent inability of the FNSEA to protect the interests of the family farm was the motive behind such a step.

Chapter 1 examines the existing literature on French agriculture and agricultural politics in general in order to isolate concepts of explanatory value for the existence of MODEF. Chapter 2 relates these theoretical questions to the historical evidence of French agricultural politics and the emergence of MODEF. It also deals with the development of support for MODEF over the period 1959-79. Chapter 3 consists of two case studies of the pattern of MODEF support in the two departments of the Charente and Vaucluse.

Chapter 4 deals with the internal organization of MODEF and the purposes to which the organization has been put. Chapter 5 deals with the ideological aspects of the organization and their effect on the operation of the organization. Chapter 6 deals with MODEF's role in the web of agricultural organizations and institutions and identifies the limitations imposed by its oppositional stance.

Chapters 7 and 8 analyse the overtly political aspects of MODEF. Given the frequent portrayal of MODEF as a satellite of the Parti Communiste Francais (PCF), the connection between MODEF and the PCF is considered in detail. Relations with other political parties are also examined. Finally, Chapter 8 deals with the relations between MODEF and the state.

The period covered is 1959 to February 1982 and the main source material consists of data gathered in interviews conducted in 1980-1981. A thematic approach has been adopted in order to facilitate the effort to avoid the limitations of the case study. Where necessary, the implications of the MODEF case for certain theoretical debates, such as that on corporatism, are considered.

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## PREFACE

The Mouvement pour la Défense de l'Exploitation Familial (MODEF) was created by a group of dissident and former members of the Federation Nationale des Syndicats d'Exploitation Familial (FNSEA), the official voice of agricultural trade unionism, in 1959.

For the first twenty-two of the twenty-three years covered in this thesis, MODEF was officially boycotted, excluded from participation in the agricultural decision-making process and constantly denounced as a stooge of the Parti Communiste Français (PCF). During these years in the wilderness, handicapped by the semi-clandestine status imposed on MODEF by agricultural officialdom and the agricultural media, by its own pathetically inadequate resources and by its alleged political associations, MODEF, by energy, self-sacrifice and conviction, managed to survive. Indeed the word survival is an understatement as MODEF went from strength to strength, obtaining around twenty-five per cent of the vote in professional elections in the departments where it presented candidates. By the time its term of penal servitude expired in 1981, ended by the parole accorded by the new socialist government, MODEF had created departmental Federations in approximately eighty per cent of the departments in which it could have potentially operated. Only the Region Parisienne and Alsace Lorraine remained impenetrable for MODEF.

The following chapters are concerned with this remarkable achievement and the way in which this dedicated group of activists and leaders set out to reverse the course of Fifth Republican agricultural policy. Amongst the issues considered are the reasons for this. What motivated these men (and a handful of women) and why did they achieve a response where their predecessors had failed? Given the accusations concerning

the connection between MODEF and the PCF, one is inevitably obliged to deal with this question in considerable depth.

A thematic rather than a chronological approach has been adopted in order to answer these questions. This decision was partly motivated by practical considerations. One of the unfortunate consequences of MODEF's poverty has been the virtual non-existence of archives, an absence which also reflects an absence of documents to place in such archives. MODEF is an organization which is deeply rooted in a personalized oral culture and therefore has not accumulated the extensive files to be found in more bureaucratized organizations. As a result, the main primary source for this research has been a series of interviews, conversations and various exchanges with MODEF activists and leaders. Such sources obviously present a problem for chronological exactitude. More importantly, however, there are less technical reasons supporting the thematic approach.

On the one hand, the thematic approach provides clearer answers to the questions raised above. On the other, it facilitates the attempt to place this limited case study of MODEF into a theoretical framework which may prove to be of more general relevance. This attempt is made in the belief that political science and history are distinct disciplines with distinct purposes.

The interviews referred to above were conducted between November 1980 and November 1981. Ninety semi-directed interviews lasting anything between thirty minutes and seven hours were carried out. Most of the interviews were with MODEF leaders and activists in the departments of the Charente and the Vaucluse. A smaller group of interviews was conducted with MODEF officials from the departments of Alpes de Haute



Provence, Bouches-du-Rhône, Calvados, Charente-Maritime, Côtes-du-Nord, Drôme, Finistère, Landes, and Vienne. Other interviews were held with civil servants, Chamber of Agriculture officials, FNSEA officials in the Charente, Landes and Vaucluse, Confederation Generale du Travail (CGT) officials from the Federation Agro-Alimentaire and with former MODEF members. On many occasions these interviews were supplemented by further meetings which allowed points of interest to be amplified, clarified and contradicted in a more informal atmosphere than that of the interview. Attendance at the 1982 MODEF Conference, both in the gallery and in the corridors, also provided an insight into the workings of the organization as did invitations to departmental Committee meetings in the Vaucluse and in the Bouches-du-Rhône.

Fortunately, these interviews could be supplemented by certain documentary sources. The most valuable of these proved to be the MODEF press, particularly the MODEF journal, L'Exploitant Familial. To a large extent it is effectively MODEF's archive since most of the documents produced by MODEF eventually materialize in its pages. La Marseillaise also proved to be an useful source.

The time at which this field research was conducted presented both an opportunity and an added complication. On the positive side, being in France at this time provided the possibility of studying MODEF under both the Giscard and the Mitterrand regimes. Unfortunately, the changes brought about by the 1981 elections had not yet proceeded far enough to make a full analysis of MODEF under a socialist President. Certain obvious changes became apparent as official recognition changed MODEF's status whilst other aspects of its ideology and practice continued as before. Where such changes were apparent, the pre-1981 period is referred to in the past tense whilst when then is no reason to believe

that significant changes have taken place, the present tense is used. The 1982 Conference, held in Montreuil in February 1982 marks the end of the period covered in this thesis.

Finally, thanks are due to those who consented to be interviewed and to those helped in other ways. Thanks are also due to family, friends and passers-by without whose assistance this research would have ground to a halt. I am also indebted to the proof-reading skills of Michael Lyne, Paul McCutcheon, Geraldine Sheridan and John Coakley without which this thesis would never have become readable. The encouragement and abuse provided by the latter two was indispensable.

POLITICS OF THEORY

1. INTRODUCTION

The starting point of this thesis is that it is necessary to explain the existence of MODEF rather than take it for granted. It is therefore necessary to establish a theoretical framework which will permit such an explanation.

There are two reasons for doing so. On the one hand, there is a need to avoid the limitations of the case study, an approach which has, despite a few brilliant exceptions, led to a plethora of narrowly conceived and unenlightening monographs.(1)

Secondly, one of the major hindrances which political science has faced is the tendency of political scientists to talk past one another. This has been encouraged by the cult of originality which insists that each new researcher regards the work of his predecessors as an obstacle rather than as a springboard to further progress. Though inadequacies in the existing literature will be confronted in this chapter, the primary purpose is to extricate the useful rather than to denounce the useless.

It will become clear that there is no monocausal explanation for the existence of MODEF. The latter half of the chapter deals with potential

ecological, historical, psychological and political theories which would enable us to account for MODEP. The emphasis, however, is on the need for political explanations of political behaviour.

The next few pages deal with explanations of agricultural politics couched in socio-economic terms, particularly the relationship between agriculture and the rest of economy and society and the nature of the class structure within agriculture. Obviously, to begin in such a way implies some a priori assumptions about their relevance to the explanation of agricultural politics. In fact, without pre-empting the discussion which follows, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that farmers are a distinct class in society and that this distinctiveness is of political relevance. For example, a random selection of opinion poll data shows that farmers have hugely divergent opinions on many issues compared to other social classes.

The result of a series of separate opinion polls published in Sondages between 1975 and 1978 are presented in Table 1.1. This shows that farmers deviate most from the norm, and are therefore the most distinctive class. This conclusion is reinforced when one calculates the difference indices between each class. These are presented in Table 1.2. On this evidence, farmer's opinions show more variation than those of any other group. No other class has a difference index (DI) between it and any other class higher than those between farmers and the other classes. If the average of the three DIs for each of the four classes is then calculated, one finds an average of 29.2 per cent for senior executives and proprietors, 33.2 per cent for middle-ranking executives and white-collar workers, 29.2 per cent for the working class and 52.8 per cent for the farmers(2)

TABLE 1:1 OPINION POLL DIFFERENCE INDICES

## CLASS

## QUESTION

	All	Owners/Senior Managers	Middle Managers/ White Collar	Manual Workers	Farmers %
Are you satisfied with M. Giscard d'Estaing	50	40	48	40	62
Do you have a positive opinion of M. Mitterrand	48	45	52	49	32
Do you think Marechal Petain's role in the last war was useful	37	34	34	36	52
Would you be willing to use a male pill if necessary	50	66	69	51	26
Would you be willing to pay higher contributions in order to retire at 62	54	40	63	57	37
Difference index between each class and norm	--	23	18.5	8	42

Source: Sondages, Institut Francais d'Opinion Publique, 1975-1978

TABLE 1:2 DIFFERENCE INDICES BETWEEN CLASSES

<u>CLASS</u>	Owners/Senior Managers	Middle Managers/ White Collar	Manual Workers	Farmers
Owners/Senior Managers	---	20	19	48
Middle Managers/ White Collar	20.5	---	18.5	60.5
Manual Workers	19	18.5	---	50
Farmers	48	60.5	50	---

---

Percentages calculated on the basis of Table 1:1

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This would suggest that it is worth analyzing in detail the literature on agriculture and class. But before describing the relevance of class in the explanation of MODEF's existence, a more general examination of the problem is required.

## 2. FRENCH VIEWS OF CLASS IN AGRICULTURE

The literature on the French case shares something in common with the vast literature on farmers throughout the world. This is the extreme lack of exactitude in definitions of class and in the use of terms such as peasant or capitalist farmers. Students of agricultural politics have been bedevilled, or, to the more cynical, assisted by the lack of clarity and agreement.

This confusion has two sources. The first is the extreme diversity of circumstances, not only visible on a worldwide level, but also in France itself. Indeed this diversity is the only matter on which a consensus exists.(3) But to this practical problem is added the divergent political perspectives of the major writers. Academic detachment has been limited since many of the academic experts have been led into governmental or parliamentary positions. For instance, a leading theoretician of the 1930s, Pierre Casiot, became a Vichy Minister of Agriculture whilst, in the 1980s, one of the leading writers on agricultural politics became the Rapporteur for the Agriculture Budget in the National Assembly after the Socialist victory of 1981.

Given this situation French writers have either refused to employ the concept of class at all, or have used it in very imprecise and opportunist ways. However, discussions of the existence or otherwise of class reveal that two separate questions are often raised. On the one hand, there is the problem of the distinctiveness of agriculture from the rest of the economy and of farmers from the rest of society. In other words, is agriculture a separate mode of production and are farmers a separate class? On the other hand, there is the problem of

internal differentiation within agriculture, i.e. are farmers themselves divided by class? The answers to these questions have usually been dictated by partisan considerations. The agrarian Right has tended to answer yes to the first question and no to the second. Their left-wing rivals have usually, on the contrary, answered no to the first and yes to the second.

The first case was put by the eminent agricultural economist, Roland Maspètiol, in his 1946 work, L'Ordre Eternel des Champs. He began by idealizing the farmer:

La paysannerie établit ses qualités comme productrice et comme réserve de ce potentiel humain, sans lequel les autres secteurs sociaux n'auraient même pas d'existence. Elle implique un dynamisme formateur d'énergies durables assurant la perennité des nations grâce auquel se forgent des forces solides au physique et au moral, des races de granit qui sont l'appui de l'histoire plus que ne le sont les superstructures grandioses ou brillantes construites artificiellement par la fantaisie arbitraire et ambitieuse des hommes.(4)

Given the elemental nature of the farmers, it was necessary to defend them against the encroachments of capitalism. Agriculture had an economic logic of its own:

L'ordre eternal des champs est une résistance et une reproche pour tous ceux qui, pénétrés d'une passion logicienne et simplificatrice, rêvent de réduire la vie sociale à un mécanisme livré à la seule puissance du rationnel et de l'organisation.(5)



In consequence: "On ne saurait les sacrifier légitimement à l'impérialisme du marché." (6) At most, the only distinction between farmers which Maspètiol was prepared to make was that between the mass of farmers and the elite minority required to organize the defence of their common interests. (7)

Such views are rarely stated explicitly now but the same ideology underpins the work of many contemporary writers. In a recent work, Joseph Klatzmann, one of France's leading agricultural statisticians, emphasizes the gap between agriculture and industry and the respective lifestyles of those engaged in each sector. "Ils occupent, indiscutablement, une place à part". (8) Klatzmann, however, is not blind to the substantial inequalities which exist within agriculture but he does not see them as indicators or consequences of class divisions. The main inequality on which he focuses is that between regions. (9) With this sociological blindness, Klatzmann's influence on agricultural statistics helps to explain why official agricultural statistics are of restricted value in analyzing sociological differentiation within agriculture.

Similarly, the typology of agriculture devised by the Centre National des Jeunes Agriculteurs (CNJA) in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and given academic legitimacy by the authors of Une France Sans Paysans, challenges the myth of "l'unité paysanne" but does so in moral terms rather than in the sociological one of class. The concept of dynamism was introduced to explain (or disguise) the tripartite division of agriculture between the profitable, the potentially profitable and the marginal agricultural enterprise. (10)

A more subtle way in which the concept of class has been avoided is the method which consists of identifying as many differences between farmers as possible. For example, Maho and Cristner discovered 120 types of ideological division within one village in the Creuse.(11) Similarly, Mendras' analysis of the sociology of rural France insists primarily on the great diversity of the 600 agricultural regions (12). This is taken to its absurd limits by Lenco who isolates 90 separate classes of farm.(13) Such a proliferation of divisions effectively prevents the emergence of any concept of class.

If it is still possible to deny the existence of class within agriculture, the changed connection between agriculture and the rest of the economy, and the consequent change in the nature of the farm itself, make it extremely difficult to sustain the traditional agrarian exclusiveness epitomized by Maspétiol. Mendras' analysis of the future of French agriculture is, perhaps, the most interesting effort to come to terms with the changed situation and to provide the basis for a modernized agrarianism.(14) According to Mendras, although agriculture had been distinct from the rest of the economy, farmers as a whole never formed a coherent class. This was due to the diversity of their circumstances, their competitive nature and the high degree of social mobility within agriculture. But post-war modernization and the greater integration of agriculture into the national economy meant that agriculture was no longer distinct. Farmers could no longer be considered a class at all since even their common interest in opposing the rest of society was no longer operative. Farmers had become an occupational category:

Ils seront sans doute assez proche des groupes que certaines statistiques dénomment intermédiaires - classes moyennes qui rassemblent les cadres salariés, les professions libérales et certains commerçants.(15)

This reflects the diminished importance and influence of agriculture in the political system. Though inter-war agrarianism had formed links with the petite bourgeoisie of the towns and cities, the agrarians were effectively self-sufficient and able to rely on themselves alone. In the changed climate of the 1960s and 1970s, the defence of agricultural interests was believed to depend on the formation of an alliance with the urban petite bourgeoisie against the emerging alliance of the Left. In this light La Fin des Paysans appears as a precursor of the Giscardian Democratie Francaise.

This refusal to make use of the concept of class is a testimony to the power of the agrarian myth of unity. Even more impressive is its impact on those who do believe that class is a useful explanatory concept in the analysis of French agriculture. Some of these writers, whilst recognizing the existence of class, regard it as of secondary importance. For instance, Burguière's summary of the vast research project conducted in Plozévet describes the class divisions within Bigouden agriculture but attributes less importance to them than to political and generational cleavages.(16) This is, perhaps, the clearest example but in the views of class described below the pattern emerges.

Given the genuine complexity and diversity of French agriculture, there is no doubt that those who wish to adopt class-based theories encounter severe practical problems in distinguishing types of agriculture and agriculturalist. How does one decide which features determine the category into which a particular form should be placed? Which are the fundamental and incidental features of the farm? These difficulties are clearly in evidence in the theories discussed below. The farmer faces a similar difficulty in deciding his own class identification. The two problems are connected by Sokoloff.(17) "The traditional difficulty experienced by Marxists and others in defining the class of peasants and farmers is reflected by the hesitancy of the farmers themselves".(18)

These problems have been "resolved" in practice by writers on the French Left by a combination of classical Marxist orthodoxy and political opportunism. To a large extent, the cynical calculation of the early French socialist movement that the non-capitalist farm was doomed to disappearance but that, in the meantime, it would be profitable to pose as the defender of the small farmers' interest, has inspired the concern with the problems of agriculture demonstrated by the modern Left.(19)

Before dealing with contemporary analyses, it is necessary to make a few remarks on the nature of Marxist orthodoxy referred to above. As is well known, the introduction of Marxism into France was hindered from the start by the distorting effects of the Guesdist prism. The theory that emerged was particularly schematic and conservative. Marx's analysis of the British Road to Capitalism and his view that the development of capitalism depended on "the expropriation of the agricultural producer, of the peasants from the soil.." attained Scripture status.(20)

The problems involved in generalizing from a theory based on British experience are evident. The most important for present purposes is the failure to recognize the importance of the difference between a country where the peasantry was eliminated before the establishment of democratic politics and one where democratic politics and the existence of the peasantry were considered co-terminous. Due to Guesdist economism, such a distinction was considered irrelevant long after it became clear exactly how important it was.

The simplistic Marxism of the Guesdists and the later fossilization of theory during the Stalinist period prevented the Left from producing the kind of complex analyses which were required, and for which Marx himself had laid the trail. Instead, random rationalizations were produced for measures of political expediency. The result was a distinct lack of interest in the Left on the part of farmers and the almost total lack of confidence amongst the activists of the urban Left in the possibility of securing support in the countryside.(21)

The major failing was the inability to take the ideological aspects of class into consideration. By this it is not meant that a class must adopt a certain ideology in order to be a class, simply that it has to have a certain awareness of itself as a class. The more rigorous definitions of class in the works of certain Marxists can be traced back to Marx's original distinction between class-in-itself and class-for-itself. The former is defined in terms of relations to the means of production, i.e. the definition of class in terms of economic relationships. The latter is a political definition, being determined by the extent to which the class is aware of its existence and its interests. This latter formulation has been taken to mean, by writers such as Lukacs, that the working class is only genuinely the working

class when it is pursuing a strategy of socialist revolution.(22) However, it is not necessary to adopt such a constricting view in order to see the possibilities which the class-in-itself and class-for-itself distinction opens up in the analysis of agrarian class structures. Paradoxically, this opportunity has been ignored on the Left until recently but has been used in mainstream rural sociology since the 1920s under the influence of the emigre menshevik Sorokin.(23)

Such neglect would not have been so stultifying if the definition of class-in-itself had been as simple as certain Marxists presumed. Though class-in-itself is supposed to be open to empirical observation, in the case of the farmer the problems raised above make this extremely problematical.(24)

Marxist debates on the class status of farmers have revolved around a dispute over whether the formal ownership of the land is significant or not.(25) On the one hand, it is argued that the ownership of the land is purely formal and that, effectively, the small farmer is nothing more than a proletarian with land.(26) On the other, farmers are considered as a separate class because of their status as property owners, a class considered to be on the side of the exploiters, if not exploiters themselves.(27)

Behind these confused arguments lies yet another problem. In order to determine the position of farmers vis-a-vis the bourgeoisie and the working class, it is necessary to have some conception of what capitalism is supposed to be. It is precisely at this point that there is a total lack of agreement. For some, capitalism is merely commodity production, and for such writers it is much easier to place farmers on the side of capitalism. Those employing more rigorous concepts of

capitalism involving the separation of capital and labour, the division of labour, the extraction of surplus value, and the permanent drive towards capital accumulation are in a much better position to understand the differences between farmers, capitalists and workers.(28)

With a more sophisticated view of capitalism, it becomes possible to argue that farmers are in fact exploited by capitalism but in different ways to the working class. It is possible to understand the implications of the greater degree of control over work exercised by the farmer. But, at the same time, these possibilities inherent in the contradictory propertied but exploited status of the farmer provide a potential for confusion, as the modes of production debate shows.(29)

To deal with the modes of production debate here would lead too far from the French writings with which we are primarily concerned. It is, however, necessary to see that more complex theories are required in order to make some sense of the reality of French rural society and agriculture. It is precisely this failing which the Parti Communiste Francais (PCF) vision of class in agriculture exemplifies.

In this respect, the PCF has made little progress beyond the Guesdist tradition. In Les Communistes et les Paysans, the party leader, Georges Marchais, and his leading specialist on agricultural affairs, Fernand Clavaud, attempt to analyze the class structure of contemporary French agriculture. Basically, the major division within agriculture is considered to be that between the limited number of "les gros agrariens" (i.e. the capitalist farmers) and the vast mass of "la paysannerie laborieuse" (i.e. the working farmers). The latter group is subdivided into four categories.

1. Farm labourers.

2. Semi-proletarian farmers. These supplement their income from their farms by working part-time on other farms or in industry in order to make ends meet.

3. Small-scale farmers. "...c'est-à-dire ceux qui produisent juste de quoi vivre."

4. Medium-scale farmers. Their farms "leur donne, en plus du modeste entretien de leur famille, la possibilité d'avoir un excédent susceptible, du moins dans les meilleures années, de se transformer en capital."(30)

These four categories share a common interest in opposing both the encroachments of urban and agrarian capitalism. At the same time, whilst the working farmers and the capitalist farmers will find themselves in conflict over issues internal to agriculture, they still have a common interest in opposing their mutual exploitation by urban capital.

The most obvious criticism of this typology is its attempt to base the hierarchy of class on income. Though there is a certain implicit assumption about the ownership or otherwise of capital, in the end the divisions identified by the PCF boil down to differences in standards of living. The inadequacy of income as a measure of class status has been repeatedly pointed out in the literature on class.(31) By using such an approach, Marchais and Clavaud avoid a lot of complicated questions concerning the degree to which the management of the farm is influenced



by the logic of the market, the needs of capital accumulation, and the nature of the labour process on the farm.

Furthermore, the influence of the agrarian tradition is clearly visible in the dubious assumption that the common interest of all these types of farmers in opposing the development of urban capital outweighs the importance of their grievances against each other. Not only does such a view neglect the threat which capitalist and non-capitalist farmers pose to each other's existence, it also ignores the conflicts over the acquisition of land between small and medium-scale farmers as well as issues such as conflicts over pay and conditions between workers and medium-scale farmers. All the evidence suggests that, having dared to brave the taboo on discussion of the agricultural class structure, the PCF, astounded by its own audacity, rushed to limit the damage.

More satisfactory but still inadequate analyses of the class structure of agriculture have emerged from those to the left of the PCF, particularly from the Parti Socialiste Unifié (PSU) and its orbit. The former Mouvement Républicain Populaire (MRP) deputy, Bernard Lambert, now a PSU leader and Paysan Travailleur ideologue, has made a more systematic analysis of the different types of farm. In his analysis he addresses himself to some of the problems which Marchais and Clavaud chose to avoid. With the enthusiasm of the convert, he is much less inhibited in expressing his belief in the importance and the reality of class divisions.(32)

Lambert's typology is, at the same time, more simplified in terms of the numbers of classes present, and more complex in terms of the nature of these classes, than that of the PCF. Lambert isolates two types of farm:

1. Capitalist farms involved in crop production, using industrial techniques and hired labour. Such farms "font partie intégrante du capitalisme" , since they permit the accumulation of capital.

2. Small and medium-sized farms making intensive use of family labour. Investment is jsut profitable enough to cover interest payments. Capital and labour power are reproduced but not accumulated. "Leur situation s'apparente étroitement aux conditions de vie du proletariat."(33)

Contrary to the PCF, Lambert places much greater stress on the conflict within agriculture, a view which helps to explain the history of post-war agricultural unionism. Again unlike the PCF, he stresses the direct intervention of industrial capitalism into agriculture, rather than the indirect exploitation through the terms of trade which the PCF emphasizes.

This direct intervention and the consequent proletarianization of the farmer is the most distinctive and questionable aspect of the Lambert theory. It has the advantage of introducing a dynamic element absent in other perspectives, reflecting the fact that substantial changes created by economic developments since 1945 have created a constant insecurity and fear of proletarianization in the minds of many farmers. (These economic and social changes are described in detail in the following chapter.) However, proletarianization of the farmer has taken the form of exclusion from the profession and departure for urban occupations to a far larger extent than the transformation of the farmer into an employee of industrial capitalists.

The major flaw in the Lambert analysis is his confusion of the effective subordination of agriculture to industry with the formal and effective subordination of the individual farmer to a particular capitalist enterprise. There are two problems here. On the one hand, there is the question of the extent to which the subordination of agriculture to industry has direct consequences on the operation of the farm. With the multiplicity of state controls and agricultural organizations explicitly concerned with the economics of farming, the impact of decisions taken in the industrial sector may be heavily mediated.(34) Secondly, and more importantly, there is the problem of effective and formal subordination. Even if the subordinate status of the farmer is visible to the observer, this provides no information on the way in which the farmer perceives himself and his relations with the firm. In fact, he may well combine the conviction that he is being exploited with the belief in his independence. Given the socio-legal status of the farmer as an independent producer and his role as the organizer of his working life, such feelings of independence may outweigh the impact of exploitation.

Lambert, however, argues that this independence is purely illusory and claims that the the non-capitalist farmer is in a similar position to that of the industrial worker. (Hence the name of his group Paysan-Travailleur.) In effect Lambert denies that there is anything specific about agriculture which separates it from the rest of the economy, except perhaps its geographical isolation. Given the existence of the complex of agricultural organizations and the persistent findings of opinion polls that there are significant divergences between the views of farmers and other sections of the population, this would appear to be misleading. Quite simply, Lambert has ignored the ideological

dimension of class, overcoming the dilemma posed by the contradictory position of the farmer by reducing the concept to its economic aspects. Paradoxically, Catholic Marxism has generated an extremely economistic concept of class.

In both the Lambert and the PCF cases, the political desires of the writers impinge heavily upon the theory put forward. In the case of the PCF, the implications of the theory for the strategy of the Common Programme and the Union of the Left are clear. Similarly, the hopes of the PSU and Paysan-Travailleur for an alliance between farmers and the working class are implicit in Lambert's work. They also share a common opportunism. Both share a belief in the inevitability of the capitalist transformation of agriculture but, at the same time, base themselves on the continuing existence of large numbers of non-capitalist farmers. But no explanation is given for the present or continued existence of these farmers who, according to the original Guesdist vision, should have disappeared long ago. In order to provide some explanation for the existence and future of the non-capitalist farmers, these three opportunists, Marchais, Clavaud and Lambert, would have had to go in search of a philosopher. Only with the Althusserian paradigm of co-existing modes of production within the same social formation, and of distinct political, ideological and economic instances, did it become possible to elaborate theories corresponding to the complexity of the agricultural class structure.

Despite the Althusserian epidemic, none of his devotees appears to have attempted to practice the theory in connection with contemporary French agriculture.(35) However, the modes of production concept has been used to some effect by one of the repentant authors of *Une France Sans Paysans*. Abandoning the moralizing concept of dynamism, Servolin

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divides agriculture into two modes of production, the Capitalist Mode of Production (CMP) and Petty Commodity Production (PCP).(36) The CMP includes those farmers whose aim is the accumulation of capital through the use of hired labour and technology. The PCP includes those who produce for the market in order to meet their family needs and to reproduce the amount of capital necessary to maintain the farm in existence. The former is the major motive, the second a means to an end.

Both sectors are able to exist side-by-side for several reasons. In the first place, the CMP is not, by industrial standards, very advanced and still enjoys sufficient space for expansion without threatening the PCP. Secondly, there is an effective division of labour between the two modes of production with the CMP concentrating on crops whilst the PCP occupies itself with animal farming. Thirdly, the PCP does not treat labour as a commodity or seek a profit on capital invested. This allows it to operate when the return on capital and labour is below that necessary to sustain the capitalist farm. Fourthly, many sectors of agricultural production, particularly those involving animals, enjoy very limited economies of scale. Finally, Servolin argues, to the extent that the PCP is endangered, this is due to the activities of industry and finance rather than agricultural capital. Servolin therefore concludes that though there is a major class division between those involved in the CMP and the PCP, this is secondary to the division between agriculture and urban capital:

Les deux catégories d'exploitant sont profondément différentes par leur statut économique, par la place qu'ils occupent dans les rapports de production du mode de production capitaliste. Mais en tant qu'exploitants agricoles, leurs intérêts, quoique distincts, ne sont pas directement antagonistes.(37)

This theory is a synthesis of the traditional responses of the Left and Right to the questions concerning the distinctiveness of agriculture and its homogeneity. Servolin concludes that agriculture is part of the overall economy but that it is also fairly insulated from the pressures to which that economy is subject. Similarly, he argues that there are class divisions within agriculture but that these are of secondary importance. There are certain dangers in such a theory. Firstly, it provides a theoretical basis for a leftist agrarianism. Indeed such a political orientation is made explicit in the article when Servolin points to the success of the FNSEA in maintaining the unity of its disparate membership. Servolin attributes this to the lack of basic contradictory interests amongst the membership. Such a view involves ignoring the factionalism of the FNSEA and the administrative methods which it has used to enrol members and control dissidents. (These are described in Chapter 6.) It also ignores the presence of dissident organizations such as MODEF, the Federation Francaise de l'Agriculture (FFA) and Paysan Travailleur.

Furthermore, Servolin's description of the relationship between the CMP and the PCP is not one of co-existing modes of production but of completely isolated ones. The CMP seems to have little or no impact on the PCP and vice versa. This would appear to be at odds with the assumption that the two modes of production are complementary since such a relationship also implies one of interdependence. Since there is no basis for analyzing the consequences of each mode on the other, it is also a very static theory. The forces encouraging and discouraging collective and individual transitions from one mode of production to the other are not considered.

However, such criticisms are secondary compared to the advance which Servolin's work has made possible, particularly when compared with the work of his contemporaries described above. In opposition to the PCF, he takes up the question of the nature of the labour process on the farm and the purpose for which the farm exists - i.e. accumulation or reproduction.

Secondly, unlike Lambert and the PCF, Servolin does away with the Marxist catastrophe theory of the eventual disappearance of the non-capitalist farmer. Not only is the inevitability of the capitalist transformation of agriculture contested, serious reasons are given why this should be so.

Again, unlike Lambert, Servolin is able to explain how agriculture is subordinated to industry and finance and the way in which this subordination is mediated. The gap between formal and effective subordination is recognized along with the ideological consequences which ensue. Servolin is the only one of these writers who affords the possibility of analyzing class in terms of the relationship between agriculture and the rest of the economy, in terms of the nature of the farm and in terms of the perceptions of the farmer.



### 3. POLITICS AND CLASS

Up to this point, the present chapter has been concerned simply with the delineation of the social classes to be found in agriculture. It is now time to examine the importance of class as an influence upon the political behaviour of the farmers. The political consequences of the distinctiveness of agriculture (or, in other words, the extent of the penetration of capitalism into the countryside) will be analyzed. It will then be possible to examine the political effects of the internal class differentiation of agriculture.

Once again it will prove useful to begin with a consideration of the existing literature on the subject. The penetration of capitalism into agriculture has all too often been assumed to have drastic effects on the political behaviour of the farmers subject to such change. Many writers have simply assumed that there is a mechanistic link between political and socio-economic change. In this way, they have been able to avoid the need to explain how socio-economic change is translated into political change.

This failure is apparent both in the Marxist and modernization perspectives. Given the similarities between these two perspectives, such a convergence is hardly surprising. Both share a common concern, political and economic development, and often differ mainly in evaluative and terminological questions.(38)

The main problem which emerges from the literature is the tendency to neglect to explain what exactly the process of capitalist development entails in terms of levels of political consciousness. Either no explanation at all is given or one is confronted by a proliferation of economic and sociological explanations for political phenomena. Several writers have pointed to the greater integration into the market brought about by capitalism as a cause of rural radicalism. Loubère has argued that the map of agricultural radicalism in France coincides precisely with the location of the most market-oriented regions - those producing wine.(39) Similarly, Gratton has attempted to demonstrate that monoculture, which implies the existence of the market, is an indicator of a willingness to protest.(40) These examples can be dismissed simply on grounds of empirical evidence alone. Many wine regions have been politically docile whilst polycultural regions have been up in arms. This factual failure masks another more theoretical one - the identification of capitalism with the market. It should be clear by now that such a concept of capitalism is inadequate and that such writers have inverted reality. "To see the market as the motive force (of capitalism) is rather like seeing the dial on a boiler as the cause of the pressure building up within it."(41) Such explanations fail because of their monocausality. Too many other variables are artificially subsumed.

Others argue that the rural de-industrialization consequent upon the development of capitalism has severe disruptive effects upon the agricultural economy. The most systematic analysis of rural de-industrialization is that by Judt. He argues that the disruption caused by this process facilitated political radicalism. His study of the department of the Var demonstrates the way in which the grievances

ocassioned by rural de-industrialization led to the adoption of socialist ideas. Judt is virtually alone in focussing on the way in which these grievances became politicized. In the Var case, he argues that rural de-industrialization meant the creation of an increasingly homogeneous rural community whose collective life facilitated collectivist ideas.(42) But it is precisely this "natural" reaction which needs to be explained.

Other attempts to explain the consequences of the penetration of capitalism into the countryside have been less aware of the problem of the gap between economic grievances and political reactions. Marx himself suggests that the rise of capitalism and the modern state assisted in the politicization of grievances because of the behaviour of state officials:

When the French peasant paints the devil on the wall, he paints him in the guise of the tax collector. From the moment Montalembert elevated taxation to a god, the peasant became godless, atheist and threw himself into he arms of the devil, socialism.(43)

This is an anticipation, to say the least. But despite its deficiencies as history or prophesy, Marx demonstrates an awareness that political events are needed to transform latent antagonisms into political action. Unfortunately, Marx himself did not bother to amplify his remarks and his successors have been reluctant to do so. For example, Pierre Georges provides a classic account of the subjugation of agriculture to industry and the ways in which industry profits from the relationship but than goes on to simply assume that this leads to an anti-capitalist or anti-urban feeling which in turn generates political protest.(44)

Nevertheless, certain insights provided by the discussion on the penetration of capitalism must be borne in mind. Firstly, there is a clear connection between political change, generally in a radical direction, and the socio-economic transformations brought about by the development of capitalism. Eric Wolf, one of the leading theorists of peasant and farmer politics, describes the situation in the following words:

Perhaps it is precisely when the peasant can no longer rely on his accustomed institutional context to reduce his risks, but when alternative institutions are either too chaotic or too restrictive to guarantee a commitment to new ways that the psychological, economic, social and political tensions mount towards peasant rebellion.(45)

Though the history of France has been marked by a chain of peasant rebellions right down to the twentieth century, post-war French agriculture represents a less extreme case. Nevertheless, the general point is valid. Rapid change leads to political radicalism. Wolf's remark also suggests that it is necessary to search for multiple causes for outbreaks of protest, such as that which involved the emergence and growth of MODEF.

Secondly, it is quite clear that the penetration of capitalism into the countryside has serious political consequences. To deny the validity and to complain about the absence of explanations is not to deny the accuracy of the descriptions of the political responses examined by the

writers mentioned above. In the French case, it is safe to assume, for the moment, that the changing relationship between agriculture and industry since the War, the impact of modernization on the labour process, the rural exodus, etc, have had a decisive impact on political consciousness and behaviour.(46) But it cannot be simply assumed that such developments are in themselves explanations for political change. This is even more the case for the analysis of specific political changes such as the emergence of an oppositional force like MODEF. In fact, the increasingly capitalist nature of French agriculture since 1945 should be regarded as a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for the creation of MODEF.

A similar situation prevails when one looks at the impact of class differentiation within agriculture on the political behaviour of farmers. Analysis of such class differentiation has been largely inspired by Stinchcombe's seminal paper, 'Agricultural Enterprise and Rural Class Relations'.(47) Stinchcombe proceeds from a concept of class which depends on differences in legal status, life style and income. There are also differentials in access to technical knowledge and in access to political knowledge and power. He then elaborates a typology of five types of agriculture, the manorial/hacienda system, family tenancy, family smallholding, plantations and large-scale capitalist agriculture. Each system has certain types of characteristic political behaviour.

Following in Stinchcombe's furrow, Linz has produced a similar analysis specific to Europe. He isolates thirteen categories to be found in European agriculture consisting of the proprietors of latifundium, proprietors of smaller capitalist enterprises, managers of large

capitalist enterprises, proprietors of farmer-capitalist enterprises, proprietors of farmer-agricultural enterprises, tenants of capitalist-agricultural enterprises, tenants of farmer-capitalist enterprises, higher employees of capitalist and farmer-capitalist enterprises, proprietors of peasant-consumptive farms, tenants of peasant-consumptive farms, proletarianizing proprietors and hired labourers. Linz then details the political characteristics of each category.(48) The bulk of French farmers fit into the category of proprietors of farmer-capitalist enterprises. According to Linz, this group is characterized by centrism, conservative nationalism, anti-clericalism, peasantism, Bonapartism, fascism and is definitely anti-urban. Simply to spell out this list reveals the problem with Linz's theory. It can be used to predict almost anything and is therefore unable to predict anything specific. Linz represents an advance on Stinchcombe in so far as he does not necessarily locate the source of agricultural protest within the agricultural community. But both suffer from the effort to reconcile the assumption that class status is an indicator of political behaviour with an inadequate explanation of the process by which grievances arising from differential positions in the class structure are translated into politically operative demands.

Nevertheless, such theories are valuable in so far as they suggest a connection between different types of political behaviour and different positions in the agricultural class structure. It is also reasonable to assume that such class differentiation is a prerequisite for the existence of MODEF.(49) Once again a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for the establishment of MODEF has been isolated.

#### 4. A PARTIAL RECONSTRUCTED MODEL OF POLITICS AND CLASS

The discussion above began with two questions; how distinct is agriculture (or how far has capitalism penetrated into the countryside) and to what extent are those involved in agriculture divided by class?

In response to the first question, the most convincing argument is that given by Servolin. Agriculture is most definitely subordinated to capitalism but capitalist pressures have been inhibited by two types of limitation. On the one hand, there are the limitations imposed on the growth of capitalist agriculture by the nature of agricultural production processes. On the other, there has been a conscious effort by farmers to create organizations and impose policies which limit the extent to which the farmer is subjected to the pressures symptomized by the market. This means that though the farmer may be increasingly subjected to the operation of the market and the drive to accumulate which it indicates, this may not be apparent to the farmer. As Eric Wolf has pointed out, simply because the produce of the farmer is destined for the market, it is not acceptable to assume that there is a direct relation between the farmer and the market. Wolf stresses the importance of intermediaries in determining the view of the market held by the farmer.(50) We are dealing with a mediated form of capitalist penetration.

To the second question, the answer which imposes itself is that there is an effective class divide between two types of agriculture and two types of farmer. Again Servolin provides the most useful categorization, the distinction between the CMP and the PCP. By distinguishing between the farm operated for the purpose of capital accumulation and the farm designed to reproduce itself, one has a clear yardstick for measuring

the objective class position of a particular farmer.

Nevertheless, it is also essential to examine the extent to which farmers are aware of what they are doing. If it is apparent to the external observer that a farmer is merely reproducing capital and labour invested, his subjective appreciation may well be different. He may be engaged in the effort to accumulate capital. As will be seen later, this is a common occurrence. Less frequent are the cases of farmers who think that they are merely reproducing when they are in fact accumulating.

Finally, there is a further problem. This is the extent to which the class divisions in agriculture are given priority over the conflicts between agriculture as a whole and urban capitalism. If the former are given primacy, the possibility exists that agricultural defence organizations will fracture along class lines. If the latter are perceived to be more important, there will be a premium on agricultural unity.

This leaves us with four propositions which will be employed to explain the emergence of MODEF.

1. Capitalism has made substantial inroads into French agriculture but still co-exists with a large non-capitalist sector.
2. Farmers are divided by class. This division is between capitalist accumulators and non-capitalist reproducers.
3. Farmers are aware of such a division.



4. This division is perceived to be more important than the conflict between agriculture and urban capital.

This series of propositions implies an acceptance of the traditional left-wing view on the existence of class divisions within agriculture. Without such an awareness on the part of farmers, the degree of support obtained by an organization, which, like MODEF, insists upon such divisions, would be inconceivable.

As to the first part of the equation, the distinctiveness of agriculture compared to the rest of economy and society, the answer is less clear-cut. Whilst recognizing that the agricultural economy in post-war France has demonstrated an increasing trend towards integration into the capitalist economy, it is essential to remember that this provides little information about the status of individual farmers. They are divided between those who fully accept the logic of such integration and those whose efforts are devoted to resisting the process.

These propositions are confronted with the historical evidence in the next chapter. It must be realized that these are necessary rather than sufficient conditions. Indeed, it should be clear by now that there are no sufficient conditions. A combination of necessary conditions must be the goal which this preliminary analysis seeks to attain. The latter half of this chapter is devoted to examining the hypotheses on the additional factors required for a complete understanding of the existence of MODEF.

## 5. THEORIES OF RESISTANCE

If it is accepted that these propositions provide a basis for an understanding of the politics of agriculture, one is still left with the problem of explaining the connection between socio-economic conditions and political behaviour. A recent work includes a succinct summing up of the problem.

It should be clear, though to many writers it apparently is not, that 'struggle' does not follow logically from the concept of the relations of production, from the definition of classes as occupying the places of producers and appropriators of surplus labour. 'Exploitation' does not per se imply resistance to exploitation, the exploiters resistance to the resistance of the exploited, or even a struggle over exploitation as such.(51)

Several types of theory have been put forward to explain such resistance. But before going any further, the meaning of the term resistance must be clarified. By resistance is meant all activity designed to end or restrain exploitation. This includes many forms of activity ranging from voting for a political party which is considered to be pursuing policies aimed at ending or limiting exploitation through acts of individual terrorism to participation in an armed insurrection.

The major advantage of this definition is that it avoids the false dichotomy between conventional political behaviour and political protest which dominates the literature. Such a distinction is polemical, legalistic and formalistic. The notion of conventional politics is polemical in so far as it positively evaluates certain forms of political behaviour and considers the excluded types as disreputable or

illegitimate.(52) This conception has given rise to two equally misleading schools of thought. The first argues that protest is the result of the breakdown of democratic politics whilst the second claims that the effective functioning of democracy is a prerequisite for protest.(53)

The former is based on a specifically Anglo-American conception of democracy as a system of consensual incrementalist bargaining. This simply ignores the differences between the various industrial democracies and the fact that certain democratic systems are characterized by greater authoritarianism and lesser willingness to compromise - e.g. France. Stanley Hoffmann's study of the Poujadists concludes with the breakdown thesis.(54) Hoffmann argues that the Poujadist movement was the result of the failure of the Fourth Republican regime to represent the interests of its small town provincial base. The flaw in such an argument is the liberal-pluralist fallacy that there is something abnormal about such a state of affairs. Each democratic polity is so constructed as to limit or facilitate the access of specific groups to the process of political decision-making. This means that to equate a disjunction between the state and a particular group with the breakdown of democracy is misleading. In fact, such a disjunction could well mean an increase in democracy - if such things could be quantified. In this light, the Poujadist movement appears, not as an indicator of degeneration but of renewal, not as a sign of despair but of the vitality of the normal political competition for access to power. Protest must be considered as an integral part of politics, not as its negation.(55)

This is not to accept the second argument that protest depends on democracy. This conception again separates protest and politics. It also completely ignores the purposes of protest and the motivations of protestors. Protest is limited to a form of militant collective bargaining designed to secure concessions from those in power. It also disguises the fact that conventional forms of politics may be used for purposes other than their formal ones. For example, why do people vote? Is it in order to choose a representative, to elect a government, or to express their dissatisfaction? Wylie has provided a classic account of such a strategy of protest through conventional politics in the France of the 1950s: "The individual's vote is no more than an empty legal gesture. Offered to the individual as a gesture, the vote is used as a gesture - a gesture of defiance."(56)

On the other hand, the possibility that protest may be part of a global political strategy designed to overthrow the political system without expecting any immediate benefit from the act of protest itself is ignored. It also rules out the possibility of purely expressive protest, protest carried out without any hope at all.

Formalism, legalism and Anglo-Americentrism are closely related. To consider an act in terms of its form rather than its purpose is to fall into a legalistic trap, and an Anglo-American legalism at that. Unlike the Anglo-American tradition, French jurisprudence is much more aware of the consequences of such a distinction. The existence of the State Security Court with its recognition of political crime and of political prisoner status is a classic example. The absence of such a distinction between form and content underpins the polemical distinction between conventional politics and protest. Given the tradition of political

instability in France and the politicization of protest movements, this paradigm is particularly unhelpful. Indeed, it is a policeman's paradigm, constituting the intellectual rationale for the criminalization of political activity.

Bearing this in mind, the form of politics classified as protest should no longer be seen as somehow inferior to "conventional politics". This is the advantage of the resistance perspective. It is devoid of the moralizing overtones of both the conventional politics/protest model and Marxist teleology. Since it is the aim of the protestors, rather than the implications of their behaviour for the political system or themselves, which is emphasized, the blindspots of other perspectives are eliminated. For example, though extremely different movements, both MODEP and Poujadism can be seen as responses to perceived exploitation. There is no bias built into the terms of the definition and thus avoids the polemical aspects of the convergence-of-opposite-extremes thesis or explanations of the false consciousness variety, explanations whose normative attractions outweigh their empirical validity.

Because of this emphasis on studying political behaviour from the point of view of the people whose behaviour one is studying, rather than from that of the state, political parties or the administration, the resistance perspective has much greater explanatory value than the conventional politics/protest model. This is particularly true when one is attempting to answer the question posed here - why do people resist what they see as exploitation? Only from this micro-political angle is it possible to take full account of the complexity of factors determining political behaviour. The perspective is not itself an explanation.

It is important that this approach should not be mistaken for a methodological individualist analysis. As will become clear in later chapters, the motives of those involved in resistance cannot be analysed in terms of individual attitudes and psychological make-up. Political behaviour must be considered in political and collective terms. Neither must the responsibility of the state be ignored. Its operations must be considered if the perceptions of its opponents are to be understood.

Apart from the attempted explanation of the types of political behaviour covered by the term resistance described in previous pages, there are four other broad categories of explanation. These are the ecological, the historical, the psychological and the political.

The most influential ecological explanation of rural politics in France has been the contrast between the political conservatism of regions of dispersed habitat and the political radicalism of the regions of grouped residence. The cases of the Midi and Brittany are usually cited as the best evidence for this theory.(57) But as Judt points out in his study of the Var, the pattern of settlement is not something which is given. It is a reflection of factors such as the availability of land, the nature of the land, the degree of security and the climate.(58) Nevertheless, Judt finds a high degree of correlation between the strength of the socialist movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and villages of grouped habitat.(59) Similar evidence is presented by Tarrow in his study of Mezzogiorno communism.(60)

Judt's refusal to indulge in monocausal explanation prevents him from mistaking correlation for explanation. In a chapter dealing with "Provençal Sociability", he shows how grouped habitat led to a more

developed public and collective life. But he also shows that there is no necessary connection between political radicalism and social collectivism. Such collectivism could have given rise to conservative politics, as in fact it did during the Restoration and July Monarchy. At most, the grouped village facilitated political organization and activity. It did not dictate which form this activity would take.

There is also a great deal of evidence which contradicts the pattern of settlement argument, some of which is discussed by Judt.(61) The evidence presented for the Vaucluse and the Charente in Chapter 3 and the pattern of MODEF support in these departments does not lend any support for the grouped habitat theory.

There are two main reasons why this should be so. On the more historical and theoretical level, Blok argues that the pattern of settlement is dictated as much by social relations as by the geography of the area. If so, far from being an explanation of political behaviour, the pattern of settlement is merely one of the side effects of social structure.(62) Secondly, even if one were to concede that the grouped village facilitated political organization in the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries, the technological revolution in communications of the 1950s and 1960s has rendered such physical constraints ineffective. With the telephone and the motor car, it is almost as simple to organize the dispersed villages as the grouped villages.

One of the commonplaces of French history and political science is that certain departments have a tradition of protest and political radicalism dating back to at least 1849. Since then, the citizens of these departments have continued the pattern of voting and political activity

established by their ancestors. Having observed this phenomenon, many writers have been content to use it as an explanation of more recent political behaviour. In such a way, the past has come to dominate the present through the mechanism of History, a mechanism which provides a convenient *deus ex machina* to absolve one from the responsibility of seeking an explanation.

The most ambitious attempt to explain the historically correlated pattern of voting behaviour remains an article published in 1957. The demographer, Berthier de Sauvigny, attempted to explain the stability of political non-conformism through such factors as the birth rate, the death rate and the impact of rural exodus.(63) Sauvigny's argument boils down to the claim that as the birth rate declined, as the death rate stabilized and as rural migration to the towns increased, the rural population became increasingly aged. This meant that the rapid de-population of the countryside in the nineteenth century left the least imaginative and most inertia-stricken members of the community behind. These continued to maintain the traditions, including the political traditions, of the village.

There are several flaws in such an argument. Firstly, the assumption that migrants are the most dynamic members of the community is plausible but unverifiable. But evidence from another country at this time, Ireland, and from the France of another epoch, the 1950s, suggests that those who leave for the cities are simply the poorest who are unable to survive in a changed economic climate.(64) Furthermore, since de-population is a dynamic process, one would expect it to lead to political change rather than promote stability. In fact Sauvigny himself points out that Aquitaine passed directly from royalism to radicalism as de-population became too severe. His solution to this



contradictory evidence is to leap to another plane of explanation, the psychological, by arguing that excessive de-population lead to alienation and political change.

Nevertheless, Sauvigny's theory included a significant innovation. This was the attempt to explain political behaviour in terms of the social structure as it exists rather than as it existed previously. One has to look at the changes which give rise to radical politics and resistance in the first place and how, and if, these conditions and political practices are reproduced.

This is precisely the great strength of Judt's work on the Var. His micro-political analysis by commune not only contests the theoretical foundations of the History-type explanation but also its empirical value. By analyzing the election results of the nineteenth century Var, he shows that although the Var as a whole followed the 1849 pattern of voting until recently, this is not true within the department. The radical areas of 1849-1852 were not those which came over to the early socialists and which consistently supported the SFIO in the twentieth century.(65) Rather than being a product of habit, the support given to the socialist movement was a deliberate innovation in the last three decades of the nineteenth century, a conscious choice made by the peasantry. However, Judt undermines his argument in the most amazing way by explaining the continuing electoral strength of the SFIO in the department during the twentieth century as being the result of habits formed in the previous period.(66)

Much of the literature which seeks to explain political resistance, or, as its authors would say, protest has been written by social psychologists or those heavily influenced by their work. If nothing

else, this suggests that political scientists have regarded such forms of political behaviour as being unfit subjects for polite society. This is especially true in the United States and, to a significant extent, in France through the medium of Michel Crozier. Psychological theories have taken two main forms, relative deprivation theory and alienation theory.

Theories of relative deprivation have become much more sophisticated since the crude behaviouralist theories of the 1920s and the simple-minded frustration-aggression model.(67) Relative deprivation theory was born out of the realization that protests and revolutions coincided not with maximum economic deprivation but rather with periods of rapid decline or expansion. In order to cope with such complexity, more sophisticated theories were necessary. But the price paid for sophistication has been confusion. Relative deprivation explanations include: rising expectations which meet with disappointment leading to political disturbance; deprivation relative to one's past position; deprivation relative to other groups; and deprivation resulting from the gap between what one estimates one's position could or should be in the future and what one estimates it will be. This rabbit-like proliferation has damaged the credibility of relative deprivation theory as has the consistent failure of its proponents to provide any evidence that anyone has ever felt themselves to be relatively deprived.

This lack of confidence is increased when one realizes that some instances of relative deprivation are actually examples of absolute deprivation. For example, to be deprived relative to one's past position is to be absolutely deprived and to suffer a genuine material loss. From the psychological point of view, there is an extremely telling criticism which has been put forward by Scott.(68) He argues

that those whose expectations are frustrated are just as likely to revise their expectations downwards to accommodate to changed circumstances than they are to feel relatively deprived. From the point of view of the political scientist, the most fundamental criticism of relative deprivation theory is one which has been noted even by some of its advocates. For instance, one of the leading proponents of relative deprivation theory, Edward Muller, has this to say:

Only when deprivation-induced frustration is accompanied by attribution of responsibility for the condition to socio-political arrangements will men become sufficiently motivated to protest.(69)

This means that even if one suspended disbelief in dealing with relative deprivation theory, it would still provide no clue which might explain why people adopt particular forms of political organization and activity. It is, therefore, of no use in explaining the existence of MODEP.

Alienation theory has a longer history and is somewhat more convincing than relative deprivation theory. The protestor is seen as someone who is alienated from the political system and therefore engages in political activity which is not sanctioned by the system. From Lawrence Wylie to Henri Mendras, a wide range of authors have resorted to the concept of alienation. From Wright's "pervasive sense of injustice" to Guillaumin's complaint - "Ils avaient toujours peur, ils ne savaient pas exactement de quoi, mais ils avaient toujours peur de quelque chose" - lie the parameters of alienation theory.(70)

Once again the value of alienation theory has been called into question by other social psychologists. The most exact attempt to define what is meant by alienation is the Seman model.(71) Alienation is characterized by four stages; estrangement, powerlessness, normlessness and social isolation. As Marsh points out, only the estrangement stage is conducive to any form of political activity.(72) Anyone suffering from powerlessness, normlessness and social isolation is unlikely to see the need for, nor the usefulness of, involving themselves in political activity. Neither will they find much opportunity to do so.

The other main problem with alienation theory is that it reposes on the conventional politics/protest dichotomy. It cannot explain why people may be involved in both these types of politics. As will be seen in later chapters, many MODEP activists fall into such a category. Many of them are elected public representatives as well as union activists engaged in a wide range of more or less "reputable" political activities. These activists combine a very positive attitude to the elected bodies of the state with a bitter hostility to the administrative agencies from which they are excluded.

Yet another failing of alienation theory is that it ignores this exclusion. Alienates are attributed responsibility for their own alienation. But, in practice, rather than resulting from psychological or intellectual inadequacy, a negative attitude towards the state may well be a reasoned political judgement based on a great deal of knowledge and experience of the political system. (Witness the cynicism about politics of the average political journalist or political scientist.) The institutions of the state, rather than individuals, may well be at fault.

Crozier's analysis of bureaucracy, styles of authority and resistance to authority is undermined by its roots in this alienation theory. Crozier attempts to explain the importance of bureaucracy and authoritarianism in France and the periodic upheavals it promotes in terms of individual psychology. It is the suspicion with which the individual treats the state and other individuals which gives rise to this pattern of political organization. Crozier lists the factors responsible for this state of affairs:

individual isolation and lack of constructive co-operation activities... strata isolation and lack of communication between people of different rank... Direct face-to-face authority relationships are avoided as much as possible... Authority is converted, as much as possible, into impersonal rules.(73)

Such impersonal authority is considered to protect the autonomy of the individual. In Crozier's terms, even those most overtly opposed to bureaucracy and authority secretly depend on them to protect their interests:

Workers... have a still more vicarious kind of bon plaisir, inasmuch as they can enjoy it only in fantasy, by indulging in the radical philosophy of revolution. But they prefer this solution. It gives them a kind of negative independence, while safeguarding their material interests and protecting them against the emotional difficulties of the face-to-face relationship with their own employer.(74)

Crozier has substituted a sub-Freudian theory of the bureaucratic unconscious for the political analysis of political conflict. The

theory is self-fulfilling since expressing hostility to bureaucracy is merely to underline one's own dependence on it. It is one of the ironies of the social sciences that those who lay so much stress on empirical evidence to criticize concepts which they find ideologically unacceptable are those who most readily resort to the use of unverifiable psychological theories to defend their own concepts.

As in other examples of alienation theory, Crozier relies on psychological inadequacies for an explanation. Like other such theories, this merely begs the question - what creates psychological inadequacy? In fact, as Crozier admits, though only as an historical explanation, individual isolation resulted from the repressive policies of successive regimes designed to prevent collective organization which could threaten their position. However, one has only to look at post-war town planning or the obstacles placed in the way of agricultural co-operatives to see that more subtle techniques have been used to achieve the same end. Similarly, the concepts of strata isolation and lack of communication can be seen, not as the results of mutual suspicion, but as the consequences of class stratification and the conflicting interests of different classes.

As for personal and impersonal styles of authority, Crozier confuses two things. On the one hand, he confuses formal rules and behaviour within the bureaucracy with the effective distribution of power and authority. More importantly, even if one accepts that impersonality rules within the bureaucracy, it is mistaken to equate this with the way in which bureaucracy imposes itself on the administered. The bureaucracy may consider itself to be acting impersonally, but the administered are affected personally and will therefore have a different view. Their

perception of bureaucratic authority is not one of impersonality but of arbitrariness. For instance, the man who took his pet jaguar to the Prefecture was not protesting about rules but against officials.(75)

Having disposed of these non-explanations, it is time to turn our attention towards political explanations. Surprisingly, the resistance to attempts to explain political behaviour in other than political terms has been led by the historian and sociologist, Charles Tilly, who argues:

Despite the recent attempts to psychologize the study of revolution by introducing concepts such as anxiety, alienation, rising expectations and the like, and to sociologize it by employing notions of disequilibrium, role conflict, structural strain and so on, the factors which continue to hold up under close scrutiny are, on the whole, political ones. The structure of power, alternative conceptions of justice, the organization of coercion, the conduct of war, the formation of coalitions, the legitimacy of the state - these traditional concerns of political thought provide the main guides to the explanation of revolution.(76)

The first kind of political explanation for agricultural resistance is important, not so much for its intellectual value, but for the frequency with which it is used by the opponents of MODEF. This is the conspiracy theory of the outside agitator. In such a perspective, any anti-capitalist movement in the countryside is the result of outside agitators stirring up unrest with demagogic demands. So, for example, MODEF is the result of a Communist plot to manipulate simple-minded farmers. Henry Ehrmann bears the responsibility for having given some academic legitimacy to such a polemical view.(77) Ehrmann claimed that PCF support in rural areas stemmed from the party's cynical manipulation

of the most politically and economically backward sections of the peasantry. It is no accident that Ehrmann begins with a quote from Malraux's La Condition Humaine. "Le paysan suit toujours. Ou l'ouvrier, ou le bourgeois. Mais il suit." (78) In the final analysis, this is simply a right-wing variant of the Marxist sack of potatoes theory. Peasants are so disorganized and ignorant that they are political idiots who must place themselves in the hands of a "sauveur supreme". Louis Napoleon Bonaparte is simply replaced by the "Modern Prince" in the shape of Maurice Thorez.

A more serious attempt to explain the political behaviour of farmers is the effort to analyze it in terms of changes in the organization of the state. There are two basic approaches to this. On the one hand, resistance takes place when political institutions fail to adapt to social change. This approach has been marginal in terms of agricultural politics since small-scale agriculture is generally regarded as falling into decline as result of social change. Therefore, farmers are usually considered to be protesting against, rather than for, change. "Progressive" forms of resistance, such as those aiming to bring new political institutions into being, have usually been limited to Third World countries and have taken on a revolutionary aspect (e.g. Algeria, Vietnam). The only contemporary example of this type of "progressive" protest in France has been the 1962 demonstrations in favour of legislative reform. (79)

The second approach, which has been more influential, argues that resistance arises from attempts to impose new political institutions on societies which are not prepared for them. Such explanations have been put forward by several writers such as Barrington Moore, Hobsbawm, Tarrow and Tilly. (80) These new institutions disrupt traditional



political arrangements at a local level, interfere with traditional patterns of authority and limit certain types of behaviour previously regarded as legitimate.(81) However, at this level of generalization, this is merely to note the historical correlation between political upheaval in rural areas and major changes in the political system. A more micro-political approach has been found to be necessary.

As far as rural politics are concerned, the two aspects of modernization which have received most attention are the nature of the relationship between local non-farmer elites and the farmers and the degree to which farmers are integrated into the national political system.

Elite-farmer relations and the nature of the authority which the former exercises over the latter have been isolated as the key variables by several writers. Geneletti argues that the political orientation of each class in agricultural society is a function of two variables - relative independence and subordination. The more independent are more likely to engage in political activity beyond the limits laid down by the local elite. Of course, the two variables are really only one, being at different ends of the same scale. Geneletti's argument simply boils down to saying that those who resist are who are most able to resist, which implies that farmers are permanently straining at the leash waiting for an opportunity to throw off the shackles of elite domination. It also implies that farmers are only opposed to the local elites. Opposition to central government, other elites or other groups of outsiders is simply ignored.(82)

Henri Mendras and the Groupe de Sociologie Rurale have also devoted much attention to the elite-farmer relationship. Eizner and Cristin argue

that the political behaviour of farmers in each region of France has been heavily influenced by the presence or otherwise of non-farming elites in the past. In Brittany, farmer conservatism can be explained by the leading role in local politics played by notables whereas the leftism of Provence can be seen as the consequence of their absence. (83) Mendras himself analyses political behaviour in terms of the type of notable which predominated in each region. The three types of notable, the apathetic and indifferent but less exploitative landlord, the paternalist and protective dominant type and the crudely exploitative correspond to three types of political behaviour, political indifference, extreme conservatism and radicalism. (84)

As an explanation of political behaviour in the second half of the twentieth century, such explanations fall into the trap of the historical tradition argument. There is also an added weakness in that there is a one-way view of the relationship between elites and farmers implicit in this theory. The farmer simply reacts to the treatment received from a particular notable. There is no recognition of the need to explain why notables in one region behaved differently from those in another. There is no suggestion at all that this could have something to do with the degree of co-operation or resistance afforded by the farmer. Similarly, though the Eizner-Cristin hypothesis may have something to say about conservatism, the connection between the absence of notables and political radicalism is demonstrated only by negative implication, not by positive evidence.

Despite the strictures presented above on ahistorical historical arguments, the most useful and rigorous attempts to explain agricultural resistance are to be found in two historical works by Barrington Moore

and Tilly. As historians they are less ahistorical and present evidence in such a way that it is much easier to distinguish that which is of secular relevance from that which is only of historical value. Both works concentrate on the connection between elites and farmers in the context of political revolution and the commercialization of the economy. (85) Moore is particularly interested in the relations of exploitation between the notables and the peasants and the political alliances on which the transition to capitalism was based. In revolutionary France, except in the Vendee, bourgeois and peasant allied to smash a parasitic aristocracy. In this view the French Revolution stemmed from the change in the role of the aristocracy from ideological, social and political leaders of the village community into parasitic aliens. In the Vendee, however, peasants and aristocrats joined in an anti-capitalist alliance. The attempt of an elite, not yet accepted as legitimate, to take the place of the aristocracy was resisted by both the aristocrats themselves and the farmers who regarded them as the legitimate leaders.

Tilly puts forward a similar view. The Vendee resulted from the attempt of the urban bourgeoisie to take power in a society where it had not yet demonstrated its right to rule. The aristocracy were still regarded as the legitimate rulers.

This approach has a great deal of value, permitting the analysis of more recent events in similar terms. For instance, the rapid replacement of the socialist and Christian Democratic elites, who dominated the agricultural organizations of the immediate post-war period, by those of the Right is a similar case of resistance to the imposition of new elites before they had established their hegemony over the farmers they

were supposed to represent. Furthermore, many of the concepts used by Moore and Tilly are useful for explaining the emergence of MODEF. As we have already seen, the relationship between the farmer and the rest of the economy is one such example. The question of the competition between classes and elites is another.

However, there are certain weaknesses in this emphasis on the role of elites. Both Moore and Tilly are dealing with "reactionary" resistance to capitalism in which non-farmer elites no doubt have a much greater role to play since such resistance is much less damaging to them than more "progressive" forms of resistance.(86) Indeed, much of the evidence presented, especially by Tilly, demonstrates that the Vendean peasants fought as much for themselves and their interests as they did out of a sense of loyalty to aristocratic notables. The contrast between the initiative and heroism of the Vendean peasantry and the attitude of the royalist leaders is another sign pointing towards such a conclusion. (87)

When one examines a "progressive" form of anti-capitalist resistance, such as MODEF, one would expect to find much less of a non-farmer elite presence. Since such movements are hostile to both agricultural and industrial capitalism, there is little incentive for the economically privileged parts of the agricultural population to participate. The multi-purpose elites of the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have been affected by the division of the labour. Farmers have taken on the tasks of leadership themselves, even in the regions where political representation is still delegated to old-style non-farmer notables. It is precisely because new lay elites have emerged from the ranks of the farmers themselves that the creation of an organization such as MODEF has proved possible.

How this replacement of the non-farmer notable by the lay elite has come about will become apparent after the change in the relationship between farmers and the nation-state has been examined. The degree to which farmers are integrated into the nation-state has also received a great deal of attention. These issues are closely related since the relationship between the farmer and the nation-state depends to a large extent on his relationship to local elites.

The most systematic exploration of this issue is Suzanne Berger's analysis of farmer conservatism in the Finistère during the Third and Fourth Republics.<sup>(88)</sup> Describing the operation of the famous Landerneau co-operative and the political role of its aristocratic leaders, she shows how a barrier was erected between the farmer on the one hand, and central government and regional administration on the other. Landerneau and its leaders dealt with government on behalf of the farmer and with the farmer on behalf of government. This form of partial political integration was responsible for the political conservatism and stability of the department. The case is strengthened by developments in the late 1950s and early 1960s when the breakdown of aristocratic domination coincided with the growth of participatory democracy in the CNJA, the end of the Fourth Republic and the position of the Parliamentary agricultural lobby, and the mass protests of 1959-1962.

Tarrow describes another form of partial integration which had diametrically opposed consequences. Unlike the position in the Finistère, the southern Italian local elites were marginal to the national political system and were therefore less able to exercise hegemony over the rural masses. At the same time, they had sufficient regional strength to prevent effective central direction of the state but not enough to force the state to accept them as mediators between it

and the people. This situation created a high degree of political awareness on the part of farmers and a similarly high degree of scepticism about the ability of either state or local elites to protect their interests. Into this vacuum came the new elites of the Partito Comunista Italiano (PCI), who were thus able to secure support for their land reform policies.(89)

There are, therefore, three available scenarios. We have the Landerneau model of efficient partial integration, the Mezzogiorno model of inefficient partial integration and the Fifth Republican model of full integration. Of these, only the latter two are able to explain farmer resistance. In the case of MODEF, the full integration model seems most suited to the facts. The power of the Fourth Republican agricultural lobby, the influence this gave to the deputy in his constituency and the ability of parliamentarians to render election results meaningless gave way to the executive-centred regime, the increased power of the administration and a more efficient link between election results and the composition of governments. Referenda, mass communications and the increasing penetration of capitalism in agriculture all suggest that farmers had been brought into a full and direct role in the national political system.

The question which has to be answered is why full integration should have been the occasion of mass resistance on the part of the farmers, the creation of MODEF merely being one manifestation among many of this resistance. Once again the gap between external observation and subjective perception has to be confronted. Contrary to the expectations of early modernization theory, there is no necessary connection between full integration into the national political system

and increasing popular participation in political life. To assume this is to confuse political participation with representative democracy and to ignore the perpetual debate on the nature of democracy. Tilly has shown that one of the consequences of the Revolution was the reduction in political participation at the local level when traditional forms of decision-making were replaced by representative institutions.(90)

Similarly, Tarrow argues that clientelistic forms of political arrangements imply a more direct and personal involvement in political life than do the impersonal party politics of the modern nation-state..(91)

In this light, it would appear that the creation of MODEP was the act, not of people protesting about changes which they could not understand, but of those who understood only too well. Rather than an attempt to resist the intervention of the state, the creation of MODEP should be seen as an attempt to resist exclusion from the centres of political life.

## 6. CONCLUSION

As with the discussion of capitalism and class in the first half of this chapter, we are left with a series of propositions which help to explain the presence of MODEF in the politics of French agriculture.

1. The political behaviour of farmers is dependent on the nature of the relationship between them and leadership elites.
2. The emergence of a lay elite drawn from the ranks of the farmers themselves is more likely where farmers are fully integrated into the nation-state.
3. The presence of farmer elites in the leadership of agricultural organizations is more conducive to 'progressive' forms of anti-capitalist resistance, such as that implied by the existence of MODEF.

The following chapter combines these hypotheses with those concerning the socio-economic situation of agriculture. These concepts are employed to explain the evolution of French agriculture and agricultural politics since 1945. Further evidence in their support will be found in chapter 3 which deals with the basis of support for MODEF in two departments, the Charente and the Vaucluse.



CHAPTER 2     MODERNIZATION, CLASS AND POLITICAL CHANGE: THE ORIGINS AND  
GROWTH OF MODEF

1. INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the key variables which determine the political behaviour of farmers have been identified as:

- i) the connection between agriculture and the rest of the economy and its implications for agriculture;
- ii) the consequent class differentiation within the agricultural community;
- iii) the nature of elite control over the political behaviour of farmers;
- iv) the degree of integration of farmers into the political system.

In order to understand the emergence of MODEF and its continued existence, it is necessary to examine these variables in the French context. The chapter begins with a description of post-war economic developments in French agriculture with an emphasis on the role of the state in subordinating agriculture to industry. The pattern of class relations established by these economic changes is then examined.

The latter part of the chapter deals with the political pre-conditions which made the creation of MODEF possible. Particular attention is given to the Confederation Générale des Paysans Travailleurs (CGPT), an organization of the 1930s generally regarded as the forerunner of MODEF. The contrast between its failure and the success of MODEF is extremely revealing on the importance of direct farmer involvement in political life and the nature of the dominant elites in rural society.

Finally, after considering the role of the PCF in launching MODEF, the chapter concludes with an account of the growth of support for MODEF throughout the 1960s and 1970s.

## 2. AGRICULTURE AND AGRICULTURAL POLICY SINCE 1945

In 1945 Europe lay in ruins. French farmers had been widely suspected of profiteering from war-time food shortages. Though there was certainly an element of truth in such accusations, it was a partial view. The subordination of the French economy to German war aims meant that the level of investment in agriculture was drastically reduced, not through choice but by necessity.(1) This meant that, even without profiteering, farmers accumulated a surplus whose existence both demonstrated the necessity for, and permitted, heavy investment after the war. The result, together with economic aid from the United States was the rapid mechanization of French agriculture. In 1950, there were 137,000 tractors in use. By 1954, this number had increased to 249,651. By 1980, the figure had increased to 1,485,000. Similarly, the number of combine harvesters rose from 5,000 in 1950 to 14,116 by 1954 and eventually to 134,000 by 1980.(2)

However attractive a picture these statistics present to the apologists of modernization and progress, they conceal a reality of debt, exodus, and the intensification of labour. As the Luddites grasped, technological innovation is not independent of social relations. The extent to which new technology is adopted depends on the economic, sociological and political context into which it is introduced. At the same time, their introduction changes this context more or less drastically. In the optimistic Tomorrow's World perspective, such

changes are ignored or simply assumed to be beneficial to everybody. A more pessimistic approach is required in the analysis of French agriculture, an analysis which confirms Marx's adage: "the instrument of labour strikes down the labourer."(3)

These figures also provide a rough guide to the extent of capital accumulation. To remain efficient, the farmer has to invest more and more. For example, with the introduction of the grape harvesting machine, it becomes possible and, eventually, necessary to do away with hired labour. In order to compete, the farmer must purchase a machine. In order to buy the machine, he must find the necessary capital. Those who cannot find this initial investment will gradually be eliminated. Furthermore, new entrants to the profession will find their route barred because the necessary capital investment is so high. The consequence of this permanent drive to invest is the increasing indebtedness of farmers. The Credit Agricole is the main, but by no means only, source of agricultural finance. Using the crude measure of dividing the total amount of loans granted by the Credit Agricole to farmers by the number of farmers, we find that, from an average of 1,600 francs per head in December 1954, the average debt had increased to 172,000 new francs in December 1978.(4) These loans must be repaid and repaid in cash. Therefore the farmer is forced to dedicate himself to production for the market, producing more and more in order to obtain the higher level of gross income required to repay his loans. This, in turn, demands more investment. It is a vicious circle.

TABLE 2:1 RURAL EXODUS IN FRANCE 1954-1980

CATEGORY	YEAR	1954	1980
Farmers		1,918,000	1,262,000
Family Labour		2,063,000	730,000
Permanent Hired Labourers		720,000	233,000
Temporary Hired Labourers		431,000	(a)
<hr/>			
Total		5,132,000	2,225,000
<hr/>			

Source: Statistique Agricole Annuelle 1954, SCEES, p. vii.

Recensement General de l'Agriculture: France Entiere 1979-1980, SCEES, p.

4

(a) a distinction is no longer made between permanent and temporary hired labour. The *Personne-Annee de Travail* concept is used. This is calculated by dividing the total number of man hours by the product of 40 (hours per week) and 275 (working days per year).

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Faced with these pressures, the result is predictable: bankruptcies; failure of young farmers to enter the profession; elimination of agricultural labourers; farmers extricating themselves before going bankrupt, etc. In 1946, the estimated active agricultural population totalled 7,400,000. Since then the decline has been permanent.

Unlike other cases of exodus, such as the Highland Clearances, there was a positive side to this. The attractions of the city cannot be denied. Advantages included lighter work, shorter hours, higher pay, better living conditions and more ways to spend one's leisure. The last two have become progressively less important with the modernization of rural housing and the growth of car ownership. Even for those who remained on the land, the exodus had some advantages, such as the extra land made available for expansion. Nevertheless, it is mistaken to assume an identity of perception between those who left the land and those who remained. Though the 'refugees' may have departed for positive rather than negative reasons, they may well have appeared to be negative reasons to those left behind. For the parents of the young fleeing the countryside, there may well have been resentment at their inability to provide a sufficiently attractive way of life to prevent the exodus. For farmers watching the departure of their colleagues, there was the insecurity of waiting to see which of them would be next at the "Bus Stop to Paris".(5)

Finally, for those who continued to work the land, the working day became more intensive. A farm with high capital investment, which must be used to the full, is necessarily operated on the principle that "time is money". Gone are the stops at the end of the furrow to gossip with neighbours. Instead one spends all day isolated in the cab

of a noisy tractor. The socially distinctive aspects of farm work disappeared. Though the most demanding physical labour was abolished and the working day shortened, each minute had to be productively used.(6)

The intensification of labour is reflected by the growth in the size of the farm. The average size of the farm has not increased as drastically as the number of farmers has declined. This would suggest that the small-scale farmer has been most affected by the exodus. In 1955, the average farm size was 14.1 hectares. By 1970, this had increased to 18.8 hectares. By the end of the decade, the average size was 23.4 hectares.(7) However, this masks an increase in the number of farms over 35 hectares and a fall in the number of farms below 35 hectares.(8) Furthermore, whereas half the total agricultural land in France was occupied by farms of over 25 hectares in 1955, the corresponding figure for 1970 was 35 hectares, increasing to 44 hectares in 1979.(9) Although no figures are available for 1955, over 500,000 hectares have been taken out of cultivation since 1970. It appears that, on the one hand, the larger farmers and non-agricultural interests have been able to increase the size of their holdings whilst, on the other, small and medium-sized farms indulged in a ferocious competition with each other for land. This competition has pushed up the price of land in many areas beyond the limits set by the normal return on capital which could be expected from agricultural use of the land.(10) This involves a greater intensity of labour for those who are able to survive. The role of the much-hoped for Sociétés d'Amenagement Foncier et d'Etablissement Rural (SAFERs) in regulating the land market has been limited by extremely conservative judicial supervision (or indeed sabotage) of their activities and the less than rigorous management of the SAFERs.(11)

The rewards promised to farmers for their efforts have not been forthcoming. The goal of parity between urban and agricultural incomes set by the Gaullist regime in the early 1960s has not been achieved, and only ever looked like being achieved in the early 1970s. Indeed, after 1974, agricultural income declined in real terms, thus widening the gap. It is true that incomes did rise until 1974 but they did not do so as fast as productivity. Due to the decline in the labour force and increasing investment, productivity rose sharply. However, despite the promises and encouragement of a latter-day Guizot such as Pisani, and much to the disappointment of the farmers, this increased productivity could not be matched by corresponding rises in income. There were three reasons for this. Production did not rise as fast as productivity. Though yields per man were much higher, the number of producers had declined. Secondly, the elasticity of demand for agricultural products is limited. An increase in supply often provokes a more than proportionate fall in price and therefore a fall, or a less than proportionate rise in income.<sup>(12)</sup> Finally, the costs of production rise as farmers require more materials purchased from industry, e.g. fertilizers. This was particularly true in the early years of Gaullist modernization when enthusiasm for technical innovation blinded farmers to its economic consequences.

Until the late 1960s when Ministry of Agriculture statisticians set up the Réseau d'Information Comptable Agricole (RICA), calculations of agricultural incomes were unreliable. This is why the figures below for the 1960s in Table 2:2 should be taken only as indications of trends rather than completely accurate records. With the introduction of RICA in the late 1960s the figures for the later years, though still flawed, are much more reliable.<sup>(13)</sup>

TABLE 2:2 ANNUAL CHANGES IN FARM INCOMES 1960-1980

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE CHANGE</u>
1960/1959	+14
1961/1960	+4
1962/1961	+9
1963/1962	+12
1964/1963	-4
1965/1964	+5
1966/1965	+4
1971/1970	+6.3
1972/1971	+13.7
1973/1972	+4.9
1974/1973	-5.1
1975/1974	-1.1
1976/1975	-1.4
1977/1976	-0.3
1978/1977	-3.1
1979/1978	+0.8
1980/1979	-6.4

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Source: Resultats d'Ensemble des Comptes 1959-1966, INSEE, Serie C, No. 7, p. 230 for 1960s figures. Comptes de l'Agriculture en 1980, INSEE, Serie C, No. 98, p.18 for 1970s.

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It must be remembered that method of calculating agricultural incomes on the basis of Revenu Brut d'Exploitant (RBE) does not include the cost of repaying investment loans. Whilst income rose to 1974 and fell during the rest of the decade, the burden of loans has been constantly increasing, as we have already seen.

As for the illusory parity of agricultural and urban incomes, the failure being officially admitted by its inclusion as one of the goals of the Giscardian Loi d'Orientation of 1980, Joseph Klatzmann, a pioneer in the field, presents the following figures:

TABLE 2:3 URBAN-AGRICULTURAL INCOME DIFFERENTIALS 1954-1975

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>PER CAPITA FARM INCOMES</u>	<u>PER CAPITA WAGES</u>
1954-1956	104	107
1957-1959	114	120
1960-1962	129	136
1963-1965	148	160
1966-1968	166	177
1969-1971	187	201
1972-1974	234	231
1975	222	249

Indices with base 100=1954. Klatzmann, *L'Agriculture Francaise*, p. 90

The farmer has also been confronted by another problem, that of the increasing influence of agro-industry in the agro-alimentary complex. This has helped to limit the return on investment by farmers. Agro-business consists of two types, those supplying agriculture with the industrial products necessary for modern farming and those purchasing agricultural produce, the food and drink processing industries. In the

case of the latter, the farmer is in a contradictory position. It is in his interests that the food processing industry is sufficiently dynamic and efficient for it to be able to market agricultural produce. At the same time, it is also in his interests that he is paid the highest rate possible for his produce - which obviously has implications for the competitiveness of the food processing industry. The potential of French agriculture is severely limited in European and world markets by the nature of the French food processing industry.(14) It is an industry which has been traditionally dominated by small firms drawing their supplies from limited areas and concentrating on a regional or, at best, the national market.(15) France has a relatively weak position amongst the multinational giants which dominate world food markets. Only BSN has any international impact. In order to market France's surplus produce Gaullist and Giscardian governments have attempted to rationalize the structure of companies in the industry and to encourage an export orientation.(16) This, of course, requires finance. Food processing companies (like any large company dealing with small suppliers) have an incentive to squeeze their suppliers. In other words, the attempt to expand export markets was to be financed by those who would only indirectly benefit (if at all) for the immediate profit of those who would directly benefit.

These factors have resulted in a growing tendency towards the integration of farmers into industrial structures. This is most advanced in the field of pig production but some of the large dairy farms and co-operatives are well advanced on a similar path, e.g. Union Laitière Normande.(17) In such systems of vertical integration the farmer remains owner of the farm and the fixed capital whilst the variable capital (animals, foodstuffs, etc.) is provided by the

industrialist along with strict surveillance of production by technicians in the employ of the firm.

This growing subordination of agriculture to agro-business is reflected by statistics. Whereas, between 1960 and 1977, the agricultural share of Gross National Product (GNP) fell from 11.2 per cent to 5.3 per cent, agro-business held its share constant at 4.7 per cent. This, of course, means that the relative importance of business in the agricultural-agro-business sector has increased. In 1960, agriculture was responsible for 70.6 per cent of the total value added by the sector. By 1977, this figure had fallen to 53.0 per cent.(18) As far as the industries which supply goods to agriculture are concerned the picture is somewhat different. There is no ambiguity for the farmer. Industrial suppliers are enemies who exploit farmers. Some of these suppliers are among the giants of French and international industry, e.g, Renault. An examination of the relative evolution of the price index for industrial products necessary to agriculture (PINEA), agricultural prices at production and the general cost of living index is instructive. Over the period 1970-1979, the PINEA index rose from 100 to 245.7. During this time, the index of agricultural prices at production rose from 100 to 198 whilst the cost of living index rose from 100 to 221.3. The result has been a rise in the share of the costs of production as a proportion of the value of total output from 22.1 per cent in 1960 to 43.1 per cent in 1980. In plain language, this means that: "...every hundred francs of agricultural produce costs 43 francs before wages, interest or rent is paid."(19) This is a result of the power of large-scale firms to exploit their clients when the latter are fragmented into hundreds of thousands of individual enterprises.

However, this does not imply an acceptance of the kind of monopoly capital thesis put forward by the PCF. It is not only the capacity of agro-business to exploit its clients and suppliers, or the state's backing for such forms of exploitation, which is responsible for the increasingly subordinate role of agriculture. It is also due to the fact that, despite spectacular improvements, agricultural productivity has been outstripped by industrial productivity. As its share of the GNP has declined, so has its share of national income. Nevertheless, the farmer who sees his efforts to produce more with greater efficiency undermined by mysterious market forces and the more overt activities of agro-business and the state is not usually in a position to distinguish between the two and their respective degrees of responsibility for his problems.

### 3. THE ROLE OF THE STATE

These economic developments were not a result of spontaneous generation. The state has played a major role in promoting them, particularly since 1958. During the Fourth Republic, agricultural policy was essentially geared towards the subordination of agriculture to the needs of economic (particularly industrial) reconstruction. Agriculture was seen both as a market for industrial goods and a gigantic reservoir of labour. But the role of the state remained much more limited than it was to become under the Fifth Republic. Governments encouraged modernization and mechanization but without paying attention to the social and economic consequences. The belief of one of the Planning Commissioners of this period that his major achievement was the elimination of excess labor in agriculture is revealing in this respect.(20) Positive intervention in

agricultural affairs did occur , such as the short-lived indexation of agricultural prices by the government of Felix Gaillard and the creation of the SIBEV to organize meat markets. But these were more responses to serious agitation by farmers than policies to which governments had a genuine commitment. Governments, of course, were limited in what they could do by instability and the well-organized agricultural lobby in Parliament.

After the return to power of De Gaulle in 1958, it quickly became apparent that the influence of the Parliamentary agrarians, characteristic of the Third and Fourth Republics had been drastically curtailed. Gaillard's indexation scheme was one of the first victims of technocracy. However, there was no specifically Gaullist agricultural policy. The Ministry of Agriculture was left in the hands of an old-style notable from the Vendée, Henri Rochereau. Economic developments were left to take their course. Only the panic inspired by the revolts of 1959-1962 forced the Debré and Pompidou governments to take action. Fears that the Algérie Française and agricultural oppositions would join forces led Debré to take personal charge of the preparation of the new Loi d'Orientation.(21) At the same time, by excluding the Ministry of Agriculture from effective participation in its preparation, the traditional style and content of agricultural policy was abandoned. The Ministry was not considered fit to draw up a modern agricultural policy, being regarded more as an institution for the political control of rural areas rather than as an economic and technical ministry.(22) By confiding the task to his own office, Debre took a decisive step towards subordinating agricultural policy to technical and industrial requirements rather than to political considerations. Later Pisani, as Minister of Agriculture, was able to

re-establish the Ministry's role in the preparation of the 1962 Loi Complémentaire à la Loi d'Orientation, but only after he had purged and reorganized the Ministry itself.

The philosophy which informed the 1960 Debré Act and the 1962 Pisani Act was more or less identical. Indeed, the latter contains little more (except for the articles concerning the SAFERs) than the decrees and ministerial orders necessary for the implementation of the former. Therefore they can be analyzed together.<sup>(23)</sup> Both Acts were based on a typology first elaborated by the CNJA. Briefly, there were three kinds of farm, the profitable, the potentially profitable and the uneconomic.<sup>(24)</sup> State aid was to be concentrated on the the potentially profitable, assisting them to expand and modernize. The uneconomic were to be assisted out of agriculture. In Pisani's words, his Act was designed to: "...rendre humaines les évolutions nécessaires."<sup>(25)</sup> Those remaining in agriculture were to achieve parity of income with the urban population. These Acts remained the guiding principles of agricultural policy throughout the Fifth Republic in its period of Gaullist and Giscardian control.

In 1980, a new Loi d'Orientation was adopted. This Act was partly an updating of the various articles of the 1960-1962 legislation and as such accepted their logic. The only real innovation was the emphasis given to the development of agro-business. Article One of the Act set out its objectives. Apart from the traditional litany on the development of agriculture, improvement of agricultural standards of living, assistance for young farmers to enter the profession and the contribution of France to the fight against hunger in the world, it also included the goal of: "increasing the competitiveness of agriculture and

its contribution to national economic growth by strengthening its export potential. This was to be achieved by:

increasing the productivity and competitiveness of agriculture, energy sources and food processing industries, through better organization of production and through greater competition in production, processing and marketing.(26)

What this really meant, as critics of the Act pointed out, was that agriculture was to be subordinated to agro-business.(27) It was designed to encourage vertical integration where the farmer would more or less become an employee of the firm who eventually marketed his produce.

Vertical integration and contract farming are more of these concepts which appear rational and progressive but which have serious drawbacks in practice. In theory, a bargain is struck between farmer and firm in which each gains, the farmer a guaranteed market, price and technical assistance, the firm a guaranteed supply of a consistent quality. But from the farmer's point of view, such developments represent a threat. In the first place, it undermines their independence, one of the main reasons they are in the business at all. Secondly, the prospects of negotiating a fair deal are reduced by the imbalance in power between the farmer and the firm, particularly if the firm is a multinational giant. Finally, the record of vertical integration is extremely disturbing to farmers. Though contentious incidents may be few in number, these have been sufficiently general to create deep suspicion. Indeed the overall thrust of agricultural policy in which industrial needs have taken precedence over those of farmers does not inspire confidence in the sense of fair play of industrialists.

The 1960-1962 Acts were an attempt to shift the emphasis of agricultural policy away from price support to structural reform. As certain members of the reactionary Parliamentary opposition to the proposals pointed out during the debates, the policy of structural reform alone could not achieve parity without an adequate pricing policy.(28) This remains a major problem in agricultural policy-making. If pricing policy was seriously concerned with the establishment of parity, one would assume that official prices, or at least the initial proposed prices, would bear some relation to rises in the cost of production. In fact, farm prices are political prices, a trade-off between what consumers will accept (or rather the repercussions of food prices on the cost of living index and hence on wage negotiations), what farmers will accept after ritual protests and what the other states of the EEC will accept. There are far too many variables involved for strictly technical considerations to play a serious role in the determination of prices. The eventual prices do not permit parity but have three different effects on three different categories of farmer. The large farmers make super-profits, the more financially secure small and medium-scale farmers manage to hold on whilst those in the most marginal financial situations are forced out.(29) The logical consequence of this superficially incoherent method of price-fixing is the gradual but sure reduction of the agricultural labour force and of the number of farms.

It is precisely this apparent incoherence which leads some observers to believe that there has been no coherent policy.(30) For example, one writer, after a rigorous examination of the 1960-1962 Acts and their implementation, argues that "les Lois d'Orientation ne contiennent néanmoins aucune ligne directrice autour de laquelle ordonner leur contenu." He goes on to claim that the implementation of the Acts was



characterized by "un perpetuel balancement, une hésitation sans cesse renouvelée.." and concludes that the Acts failed because of the inclusion of contradictory objectives.

This analysis suffers from a disease prevalent in French political science - legalism. Any self-respecting law in France contains contradictory aims. But there are objectives and objectives. One must make a distinction between the sections of a law designed to be operative and those designed to be serve as window dressing.(31) Furthermore, one cannot analyze the actions and intentions of politicians and officials simply by looking at the text of laws and decrees. One must examine all the available evidence, such as specific decisions, party ideology, etc. Finally, there is the possibility that it is precisely the incoherence and contradictions of a law which permit the attainment of its real objective.

At the risk of launching a "proces d'intention" against Debre and Pisani, it is clear that if their legislation was designed to expand capitalist agriculture and eliminate as many of the non-capitalist farmers as possible at low political cost, it cannot be regarded as a failure. It was the contradictions in the legislation and the illusions which they created which permitted such fundamental changes to proceed, after the replacement of Pisani by the Fifth Republic's "fireman", Edgar Faure, without serious danger to the state in general or to the parties of the Right in particular.

Similarly, the practical effects of the 1980 Loi d'Orientation itself were limited since its promoters spent less than a year in office after its promulgation. Nevertheless, the Act can be seen as a résumé of the agricultural policy of Giscardianism. By assisting private enterprise to compete more effectively with the co-operatives and by appointing Michel Debatisse as junior minister with responsibility for agro-industry, the Giscardian government removed more of the barriers between the farmers and the logic of the market.

#### 4. THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY (EEC)

Agricultural policy is not, of course, solely decided in the national context. The Fifth Republic coincided with a completely new development in the politics of agriculture. The Treaty of Rome created a European dimension to agriculture which not even the most isolated and xenophobic farmer could ignore. Not only did the European Economic Community (EEC) create European markets for agricultural produce, it also created a greater link between economic and political issues. The classic example has been the annual price negotiations in the Council of Ministers and the surrounding agitation which has accompanied them. (32)

It is an irony that the EEC, an institution whose ideology is so heavily marked by the idea of competition, has come to be responsible for one of the most interventionist agricultural policies in the world. As in other fields, such as steel, the ideology has had to be jettisoned in order to maintain the existence of the Community.(33) At the same time, the official ideology retains enough force to prevent the adoption of certain types of policies. This contradiction between ideology and

practice is a result of the different roles of the Commission and the Council of Ministers. The more ideologically motivated proposals of the Commission (where formerly pragmatic politicians become incurable romantics) are modified by ministers whose freedom of action is more limited by political and electoral constraints.

The Mansholt Report, adopted by the Commission in December 1968, was greeted with protests from the Atlantic to the Adriatic. Aiming to reduce the cost of price support, Mansholt proposed the elimination of five million hectares and people from agriculture during the 1970s. Price policy was to be used for structural objectives whilst farmers were to be encouraged to leave the industry through financial incentives.<sup>(34)</sup> Reaction to the report was so strong that governments were obliged to deny that it was the basis for future policy. Perhaps their main objection was Mansholt's indiscretion. Though the series of EEC Directives issued in April 1972 on structure, social policy and investment were obviously imbued with Mansholt's perspectives, price policy did not become an instrument of structural policy. Neither was structural policy given the primacy advocated by Mansholt.

Since then the EEC has continued to grapple with the problem of the increasing cost of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) whilst refusing to consider changes which clash too openly with its liberal principles and which would involve it in a more direct interventionist role in the structures of production. Quotas or planning have been ruled out as solutions, since this would freeze the structure of European agriculture and therefore prevent the continued rise of large-scale capitalist agriculture. In a preliminary report on the reform of the CAP published in 1980, the Commission continued to reject socialist-inspired proposals

and opted for an extension of the idea of corresponsibility. In other words, the producers themselves were to participate in financing the disposal of surpluses. This form of taxation was introduced for milk and sugar producers. It is a tax in the EEC tradition. Like Value Added Tax (VAT), everyone pays. The effectiveness of corresponsibility taxes in achieving their objectives - improved marketing and reduced production - is doubtful. The distribution of the proceeds of the taxes is also open to question since the EEC only publishes figures referring to the uses of such monies, not the recipients.(35)

Despite the competitive nature of the EEC, it has not been wholly negative for French farmers. Those involved in producing produce for which the market is relatively organized (e.g. wheat, sugar) have gained from higher EEC prices. Others have found much-needed export markets within the Community. On the other hand, certain producers have had to face more intense competition both in Europe and on the domestic market (e.g. non-Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée, or AOC, wines). EEC-related prosperity has not, therefore, been shared equally by all sectors of French agriculture. It is the most capitalist sectors which have been the prime beneficiaries.(36)

French farmers have also had to face the consequences of monetary crises and diplomatic initiatives which have resulted in the more or less temporary non-application of the Treaty of Rome. The Monetary Compensation Amounts (MCA), introduced to allow France to overcome the consequences of the 1969 devaluation, became a normal feature of the Community. The use of MCAs to maintain unity of food prices within the Community led to distortions in favour of those countries with strong currencies.(37) EEC diplomacy, in the shape of the Lomé Convention, no

matter what its motives may be (aid to the Third World or securing cheap food), also posed a threat to many French farmers, particularly in the south. Similarly, the temporary exemptions accorded to the UK to allow it to continue to import New Zealand produce led to increased British competition on European markets without a corresponding extension of the British market. In general, one can safely conclude, that for the majority of French farmers, the EEC has not lived up to its early promise.

In practice, twenty years of right-wing agricultural policy, whatever its stated objectives, has encouraged the development of capitalist agriculture. The uneconomic farms, as defined in the 1960s, have been more or less eliminated. But in the process of capital accumulation (or economic growth), farmers cannot stand still. They must constantly increase their capital investment and, where possible, extend the size of their farm. As a result, the viable minimum has been constantly rising. Those who considered themselves to be medium-scale farmers in the 1960s are the small producers of the 1970s and 1980s.(38) The consequence has been that a very much smaller number of farmers than the number which believed in the advantages of modernization have been able to pass definitively into the modern profitable and stable sector. The majority continued to linger in a no-mans-land between stability and bankruptcy.

## 5. CLASS DIFFERENTIATION

These economic developments have brought about serious changes in the social structure of agricultural communities. The myth of "peasant unity" has obscured the fact that these changes are perhaps less drastic than one might have expected. The unity myth reposed on another - the homogeneity of the agricultural community. Yet historical accounts show that complex class structures existed in farming communities, and to an even greater extent, in rural society. In his study of the Var, Agulhon identified landowners, large tenant farmers, small tenant farmers, small owner-occupiers, sharecroppers and labourers, all graded in a complex hierarchy.(39) Weber has also pointed out the existence of signs of class conflict in the nineteenth century, such as the sentiments revealed by the popular Lauragais proverb - "It's raining insolence". Summer rain helped the small farmer's corn and damaged the large farmer's wheat, which inspired and permitted the insults of the small-scale producers directed against their richer neighbours.(40)

The real transformation brought about by the modernization of agriculture in the post-war period was not so much that of the class structure itself but of the position of the individual in that structure. Modernization brought rigidity in its train. Upward social mobility became much more problematic and outward geographical mobility increased. Before agriculture began to require heavy capital investment, farmers could reasonably hope that, through hard work and restriction of consumption, they would be able to improve their status by acquiring more and more land as their careers progressed.(41) Similarly, the agricultural labourer could hope to acquire a farm of his own at some stage. But when it became necessary to make heavy

investments on top of the purchase of land, it became increasingly difficult for the small farmer to improve his situation. For the labourer, his prospects of upward mobility became virtually negligible, except by leaving for the towns, which most did.

On the other hand, before the advent of capital-intensive farming, the members of agricultural communities could be reasonably sure that they had a place in that community, barring major natural or economic disasters, for as long as they wished to remain. But the decline of the agricultural labour force throughout the 1940s and 1950s demonstrated that this was no longer the case. One no longer had the choice of keeping to one's station in life, one had to move out into the towns. The exodus and concentration of land were the clearest signs of inequality and class differentiation. The threat of a forced departure from agriculture remained a permanent sign of distinction between the large and small-scale farmer. The transition from property owner to proletarian marked an increasing degree of inequality.

To what extent has economic development brought about inequalities between those remaining in agriculture? This is a very difficult subject to analyze for two reasons. In the first place, the available statistics on agricultural income are unsatisfactory until the 1960s. Secondly, Ministry of Agriculture and INSEE statisticians have not shown themselves, in general, to be particularly interested in the collection of data which reveals the class structure of agriculture. In fact, both agricultural economists and rural sociologists in general have neglected this question. Tavernier and his colleagues in Histoire de la France Rurale are exceptional in drawing so much attention to inequality in agriculture. The evidence which they present suggests

that income inequality is extensive. For example, they provide figures for the period 1969-1973 concerning the proportion of farmers in various income brackets. There was some fluctuation, as one would expect with agricultural incomes, but in each year between two-thirds and four-fifths of farmers earned less than twice the minimum legal wage. Within this group, the majority earned less than the legal minimum. At the same time, the number of farmers earning three times the legal minimum or over remained less than six per cent (except for the boom year of 1972) (42). They carry on to analyze other indicators of income and wealth such as housing, consumer durables, holidays, etc. In every case the evidence reveals great inequalities. For example, the children of operators of large farms are four times more likely to acquire the baccalaureat than the offspring of small-scale farmers.(43)

However, no evidence is presented which demonstrates increasing inequality over time. But it is likely that certain forms of inequality are much more visible than others (e.g. between the man with a Mercedes and his neighbour with a patched-up 2CV) and hence lead farmers to a subjective appreciation that inequality has increased. Furthermore, the conclusion drawn by Tavernier and his fellow authors supports the argument that the class structure has become more rigid:

En somme, l'énorme effort de transformation technique accompli depuis trente ans a juste permis aux agriculteurs, qui ont pu rester à la terre, de conserver leur place relative dans une économie et une société en évolution constante.(44)



## 6. AGRICULTURAL UNIONISM

The economic and social context in which MODEF was created and has grown has been described above. It should be clear that the creation of MODEF in 1959 was not simply a voluntaristic attempt on the part of the PCF to set up a satellite organization in the countryside, as the more paranoid right-wing commentators have argued.(45) As the MODEF leader, Raymond Mineau, put it: "Le MODEF n'est pas sorti comme ça du cerveau de Jupiter."(46) One must examine both the historical tradition from which MODEF emerged and the economic, political, and sociological changes which agriculture has undergone since the War.

An interest in agricultural problems was one of the more original features of the labour movement which began its reconstruction in the 1880s. After the defeat and massacre of the Paris Commune by a largely peasant army, the importance of winning over or neutralizing the peasantry could not be ignored - even by the most schematic Guesdist. As early as 1884, the Federation des Travailleurs Socialistes de France (FTSF) adopted an agricultural policy based on primitive Marxism. This was opposed by a Guesdist policy which allied revolutionary rhetoric to reformist proposals, which was promptly condemned by Engels as an excessive concession to peasant conservatism.(47) Though the early socialist movement scored some political successes in rural areas, their efforts to set up agricultural unions to compete with the aristocratic-conservative and bourgeois-radical ones were ineffective. Peasant protest movements continued to be limited in time, such as the 1907 revolt in Southern France, or in space, as in the battles in the Adour Basin of the 1920s.

Only in the 1920s did the non-radical Left succeed in implanting its satellite organizations in the countryside. The Section Francaise de l'Internationale Ouvriere (SFIO)-dominated Conseil National Paysan (CNP) competed with the PCF-dominated Confederation Générale des Paysans Travailleurs (CGPT). In practice, both remained of limited importance. The former effectively existed in only twenty-two departments (seventeen south of the Loire and three in Brittany) whilst the latter was represented in a similar number of departments, though with slightly more influence north of the Loire.(48)

The CGPT has been regarded as the forerunner of MODEF. As one party historian argues: "Le MODEF reprenait, en l'actualisant, la tradition mais aussi l'expérience acquise de la Confederation Générale des Paysans Travailleurs."(49) This view is confirmed by the fact that MODEF explicitly refers to the CGPT as one of its ancestors.(50) Much of the leadership of the two organizations came from the same political background. Both organizations agitated around similar themes. The resemblance between the CGPT "Charte Revendicative" of 1939 and the MODEF Declaration of 1959 is striking.(51) The need to increase agricultural prices is the common principal concern. Both documents emphasize the idea of preferential treatment for small and medium-scale farmers as well as the need to control imports, from the colonies in the case of the CGPT and from the EEC in the case of MODEF. Similarly, both organizations protest against the rising cost of industrial goods required by farmers and against taxes placed on the consumption of agricultural produce, especially wine. Finally, both condemn the rural exodus and stress the need for economic organizations under the control of farmers themselves in order to defend their material interests.

However, unlike the CGPT, MODEF has succeeded in extending its audience beyond the activists and the electorate of the PCF. The lessons of the relative failure of the CGPT were learnt to a large extent. Tavernier gives three reasons for this failure.(52) In the first place, union and party were too closely linked. Leading members of the CGPT also occupied important positions in the PCF apparatus and were even elected as PCF MPs. This was the case of Waldeck Rochet, Renaud Jean (elected in the Lot-et-Garonne and President of the Chamber of Deputies Agricultural Committee under the Popular Front) and Marius Vazeilles (elected in the Corrèze). This excessive politicization of the union limited its ability to appeal to farmers on purely professional grounds. As will be seen in Chapter 7, MODEF has been much more discreet.(53)

Secondly, the CGPT failed to recruit and train enough farmers to assume the tasks of organization. To a certain extent it had to rely on non-farmers, whose presence could not fail to arouse the suspicions of a still relatively autarchic (in political and sociological terms) peasantry. This weakness was all the more serious since Renaud Jean fought a never-ending battle to overcome the apathy of both the PCF leadership and rank and file concerning agriculture. This latter problem is one which remains unsolved.(54) However, it is mistaken to look at the problem in this way. The failure of the CGPT was not simply one of incorrect political approaches. The fact is that farmer activists were just not to be found. Given the conditions which allowed conservative elites to maintain their hold over the mass of the peasantry, no amount of cleverness would have allowed the CGPT to achieve more than the limited success that it did obtain. To the extent that MODEF has overcome this difficulty, the reason lies more in the changes in agriculture since 1945 than in its own efforts.

The final reason put forward by Tavernier to explain the failure of the CGPT is its inability to compete with the right-wing unions in providing services to farmers (e.g. bulk purchasing of fertilizers and feedstuff at reduced prices, legal advice, etc.), services which were, and remain, one of the major attractions of agricultural unionism. In the inter-war period both the clerical right-wing Union Centrale des Syndicats des Agriculteurs de France, "le syndicalisme des ducs", and its radical rival, the Federation Nationale de la Mutualité et de la Cooperation Agricole, concentrated on the service role. The priorities of these organizations were the provision of cheap goods to farmers through bulk buying, a limited amount of technical education and, last and least, a circumspect engagement in political lobbying.(55) Indeed as well as the CGPT the less radical attempts at self-organization on the part of farmers came to grief on this point. Both the Breton 'syndicats des cultivateurs-cultivants' led by Sillonist priests and the Entente Paysanne perished through financial as well as political weaknesses.(56) This inability, or unwillingness, to fulfil the service role has also been one of the greatest weaknesses of MODEF.

The service role depended on the existence of people able and willing to take on complex and time-consuming tasks. These were mainly non-farming members of the rural community. The CGPT remained an activist organization whose members rarely attained the kind of notoriety which placed them on an equal level with the non-farming rural elites. To the extent that MODEF has succeeded, this has largely been due to the ability of its leaders to break through this barrier. Before 1945, there were several factors preventing the emergence of such farmer notables. The ideology of "l'unité paysanne" blocked the emergence of class-based ideologies. This ideology promoted the belief that the agricultural

sector was not simply part of the economy but an entirely separate society. Internal conflicts between the members of this society were only family quarrels which should not be allowed to obscure the fact that the outside world, particularly in the shape of the industrial working class, was the real enemy. Those members of the elites, particularly amongst the Catholic aristocracy, who were aware of the effective stratification which existed in rural society made conscious and determined efforts to prevent differences in social status turning into political conflict. In 1913, one of the leading Catholic ideologists, Clermont-Tonnerre, stressed the need for the larger farmers and proprietors to involve themselves in professional organizations, even if it brought them no material benefit.

L'association professionnelle est un devoir pour les riches, qui pouvaient sans doute se passer de son concours, mais qui demeurent moralement obligés de mettre tous les biens qu'ils détiennent au service de leurs frères, les pauvres.(57)

This ideology and the physical presence of the elites in agricultural organizations was sufficient to maintain the mass of farmers in their place. Suzanne Berger's account of the domination of the Landerneau co-operative by the Catholic aristocrat, Hervé de Guébriant, provides a classic example of this process of elite control. (58) In general this system of domination remained effective until World War Two - though, as the existence of the CGPT shows, the cracks were beginning to show.

The end of this myth and the development of agricultural unionism divided by class rather than by religion was finally accomplished by the post-war economic miracle. Nevertheless, social and economic

transformation was merely a necessary rather than a sufficient condition for the creation of farm unions controlled by the farmers themselves. The establishment of an organization such as MODEF, which rejected the dominance of agricultural as well as rural elites, was only possible because the elites were already in a position of weakness. This breakdown of hegemony was due to the strategic failures of the rural elites faced with economic crisis in the 1930s and modernization in the 1940s and 1950s. The 1930s economic depression disrupted the traditional political division of labour between radicals and reactionaries and their relations with their respective clienteles. The competitive consensus between the Catholic Right and Radical Centre born with the "ralliement" of the late nineteenth century and consecrated with the "Union Sacree" of 1914 broke down. This competitive consensus was based on an implicit agreement to compete for political dominance in Paris and in the provinces but within certain parameters. Both sides were agreed on the essentials of opposition to social reform, the defence of property, acceptance of the form of regime and the continued subordination of the peasantry. The issue at stake was simply who was to control the peasantry.

But in the 1930s this consensus was abandoned by the Right. The Right adopted unprecedented forms of action. Faced with world crisis, the agricultural presence in Parliament was no protection. Direct action and Dorgeres took the place of Parliament and Poincaré. But since there was no serious competition for the support of the peasantry from the Left, the reason behind the mobilization of the peasantry can only be seen as a way of intimidating the industrial working class rather than as a necessity forced upon the elites to maintain their troops in order. (59)

The irony is that those who made the greatest efforts in the 1930s to preserve the rural monolith were those who did most damage to their own cause. The radical agrarian stance of the Right did more to undermine the idea of peasant unity than the strenuous but more or less ineffective efforts of left-wing propagandists. The activities of Dorgeres and other agrarians violated the principle of partial political integration of the peasantry upon which rested elite domination. By mobilizing the peasantry for mass action they brought the farmers into politics. More or less violent demonstrations and various other unconventional activities led farmers to both think and organize for themselves. In the words of Tavernier: "Les meetings, les manifestations, les opérations de commando surviennent de révélateur à beaucoup de paysans qui prennent alors conscience qu'ils constituent une force sociale.(60) For the farmers, the confrontation with the Republic revealed that agriculture was divided by political interests which might override immediate financial concerns. Similarly, the elites realized that their political dominance and economic interests were not necessarily mutually compatible. As in the Second Republic, some came to the conclusion that the only way to protect the latter was to surrender the former to a dictator. In the absence of a home-grown product, Hitler had to be imported.

The decline of the traditional rural elites was completed under the Vichyite Corporation Paysanne. Despite the dominant position held in the Corporation by the pre-war agrarians, they failed in their objectives. The presence of such leaders resulted in little benefit for the mass of farmers. The Corporation Paysanne proved more a means of controlling farmers than a system of over-representing farmers in political and economic decision-making.(61) Whilst the elites were

being discredited by collaboration, many ex-Dorgerist storm troopers were becoming the rank and file of the Resistance, following in Dorgeres own footsteps. The Resistance and Liberation completed the political training of sufficient numbers of farmers to permit the total exclusion of non-farming elites from the new agricultural organizations. These men formed the backbone of the Confederation Générale de l'Agriculture (CGA) and its dominant constituent part, the FNSEA.

In this way the FNSEA came under left-wing control, a control as fleeting as the the governmental alliance which promoted it. Once the initial enthusiasm of the Liberation had worn off, it became apparent that, contrary to left-wing mythology, the Resistance was not synonymous with the Left. Activists whose sympathies lay with de Gaulle rather than with his temporary allies had also undergone their political training during the occupation. At the same time, as popular anger against the collaborators dissipated, the ex-Vichyites gradually began to emerge from obscurity. With the split in the Left after 1947, the unholy alliance of Gaullists and Vichyites was able to regain control of the apparatus of agricultural organization.(62) Whilst all sections of the Left were purged from positions of responsibility within the FNSEA, the Cold War provided the impetus for the expulsion of the PCF-controlled Federations. One after another, the Federations of the Haute-Garonne, Ariège, Charente, Tarn-et-Garonne, Haute-Loire, Lozère, Landes and Haute-Pyrénées followed each other into the wilderness between 1950 and 1952.(63)



The marginal position of the Left within the reconstructed FNSEA was not an accurate reflection of the political composition of agriculture, as the decline in membership in left-wing regions revealed. The connection between the FNSEA and the Agrarians in Parliament meant that the FNSEA leadership was to the right of its membership. The Left was now too strong to be completely ignored. At the same time, the nature of political control in agriculture had changed from a system based on the ascriptive pre-eminence of rural non-farming elites to one based on the functional leadership of the activist members of the farming community. Given this system where explicit consent and demonstration of competence became vital, artificial unanimity and the use of administrative methods to deal with political undesirables could not be pursued forever.

Reaction was not long in coming. In September 1953, the Comité de Guerët met for the first time.<sup>(64)</sup> Eighteen Federations in and around the Massif Central and Poitou-Charentes met to organize protests over the catastrophic situation on meat markets. Faced with such a widespread display of disaffection, even the right-wing national leadership of the FNSEA was obliged to embarrass its friends in government by verbally supporting the protests. On October 12, road blocks went up in fourteen departments - paralyzing most of Central France. This mass protest, directed against both the government and the leadership of the FNSEA is regarded as the beginning of the modern farmers movement. According to Gratton: "En 1953, le mythe de l'unité paysanne a vécu."<sup>(65)</sup>

Although 12 October 1953 represents a landmark in agricultural politics, there was as yet no alternative organization to the FNSEA. Despite the fact that the preconditions for the eventual creation of MODEF now existed, it was to take another six years before the new organization was born. There were two reasons for this failure. In the first place, "the owl of Minerva only spreads its wings with the coming of the dusk." Despite the fact that small and medium-scale farmers were now acting as if they had rejected the idea of unity with capitalist agriculture, they were not yet aware of the implications of the Comité de Guerët protests. For example, one of the future leaders of MODEF, Marcel Sintas, stood on a joint list with FNSEA candidates for election to the Landes Chamber of Agriculture throughout the 1950s.(66)

Secondly, the opposition to the right-wing leadership of the FNSEA was itself extremely divided between socialists and communists. The attempt by Philippe Lamour (general secretary of the CGA) and Roland Viel (leading light in the Comité de Guerët) to set up the Comité Générale d'Action Paysanne (CGAP) in December 1953 foundered on the rocks of the Cold War. This committee, designed to coordinate the actions of the dissident and expelled Federations, was thought of as a faction within the FNSEA rather than as an alternative union.(67) This attempt failed because of political and personal conflicts. The hostility between the SFIO and the PCF, together with the wheeler-dealer reputation of Lamour, led the PCF's agricultural activists to keep their distance.(68)

However, the impetus of the Comité de Guerët protests, especially since they succeeded in forcing the government to take action to regulate meat markets, tended towards the creation of some kind of focus for the opposition. In 1955, the Comité Nationale de Défense de l'Exploitation

Familial was set up. Described as "une ébauche du MODEF", this organization brought together the men who were to lead MODEF from its foundation until 1978, Alfred Nègre and Raymond Mineau. Its programme became the basis of MODEF's proposals. Working in obscurity for four years it prepared the way and built up the contacts which permitted the creation of MODEF in 1959.(69)

But why did a tendency crystallize into an organization at this particular time? This can largely be explained by the political situation in 1959. Indexation of agricultural prices had been abolished by the Debré government without any serious opposition from the FNSEA. Furthermore, the official leadership of the FNSEA was being challenged by dissidents whose views represented an even greater threat to small farmers than the FNSEA itself - the apostles of modernization of the CNJA. At the same time, the wider political situation was conducive to such a step since the degeneration of Guy Mollet and the SFIO majority had left a residue of dissident socialists prepared to work with communists. Finally, the example of Poujadism posed both a threat and an opportunity. Tavernier argues that the creation of MODEF was inspired by PCF fears that the discontent of farmers would be exploited by the extreme Right, if they were not pre-empted.(70) Since 350,000 farmers are estimated to have voted for Poujadist candidates in the 1956 elections, this argument is plausible.(71) The problem with such a view is that it begs the question, why wait so long before attempting to pre-empt Poujade, who had all the time in the world to pre-empt MODEF? Though it is true that PCF activists were involved with Poujade, this collaboration had come to an end in mid-1955. In fact the evidence would suggest that, rather than inspiring the creation of MODEF, the Poujadist movement hindered it. Only when the bankruptcy of Poujadism

had become apparent was there hope of involving farmers in organizations which were more integrated into party political networks. Tavernier's article implies that MODEF represents a form of left-wing Poujadism, something which will be seen to be clearly untrue in the following chapters. This is not to deny the influence of Poujadism on the founders of MODEF. Poujade's major achievement was to prove that hitherto disorganized and apathetic groups could be mobilized without state patronage and could be attracted to an anti-capitalist platform. These were the material and ideological cornerstones on which MODEF was to be built.

Finally, the role of the PCF in the creation of MODEF must be examined. The right-wing allegation that MODEF was the pure product of Waldeck Rochet's imagination and Stalinist discipline can be discounted. As we have seen, an organization along the lines of MODEF had been in gestation for several years and would probably have eventually come into being without the intervention of the PCF. Tavernier's conclusion, that MODEF resulted from a PCF initiative is correct, in so far as it goes, but he does not deal with the background which made such a step a possible.(72) Nor does he deal with the way in which the party operated in the creation of MODEF.

Tello, on the other hand, correct in his emphasis on the concrete conditions which gave rise to MODEF, goes to the opposite extreme. He denies that the PCF played any role whatsoever in the creation of MODEF. He points out that out of the forty delegates who attended the founding conference, only ten were PCF members. These were vastly outnumbered by members of the SFIO and non-aligned individuals.(73) Apart from Tello's evidence, an examination of La Terre also suggests that the party's

involvement in MODEF was low-key. For example, there was no reference to MODEF at all in La Terre before the founding conference. Only a week later did an easily overlooked article appear asking organizations to join MODEF. The following week MODEF received more prominent coverage but it was not until July 1959 that MODEF hit the headlines (which it shared with the Comité de Guerët).(74) One cannot accuse the PCF of an all-out mobilization on behalf of MODEF.

This is not to argue that the creation of MODEF had nothing at all to do with the PCF. Tello poses the question: "Pourquoi, en avril 1959, le MODEF a-t-il été crée? Pour être la courroie de transmission du Parti Communiste dans les campagnes ou bien pour répondre à un besoin profond de la petite et moyenne paysannerie? His conclusion is untenable. C'est avant tout pour combler le vide syndical existant face à une politique liquidatrice de l'exploitation familial.(75) Disciplined party activists would not have taken such an important step without the approval of the party leadership. Furthermore, MODEF was helped by the fact that its backers and activists could rely on party connections to build up a network of contacts in various departments in the early years of its existence. For example, Jean-Baptiste Doumeng was a member of the first National Council of MODEF and, though his active participation was limited, his business contacts were used to good effect. For example, the Vaucluse Federation of MODEF was launched by officials of the local co-operative in Pernes-les-Fontaines with whom Doumeng had dealings and whom he encouraged to set up MODEF in the department.(76) There is no doubt that PCF members played an important, though not exclusive, role in the creation of MODEF.

Tello's argument has wide ranging implications. It is one more example of the PCF's constant tendency towards self-denigration - denying its involvement in various activities. Denying that the PCF had anything to do with the creation of MODEF involves an implicit acceptance of the idea that there is something wrong with the party. Tello is, in fact, accepting the right-wing view that the involvement of the PCF makes an organization disreputable per se. Furthermore, he devalues the role of the political party. If the party did not play any role in the creation of MODEF, its usefulness is limited to echoing the demands of MODEF. This is not only factually incorrect but involves a conception of union-party relations which nothing in the theory or practice of the PCF justifies. Fortunately for the party, not all its activists are so inhibited.

#### 7. MODEF since 1959

The founding conference of MODEF in April 1959 involved forty delegates from twenty departments meeting in a room in Toulouse. At the 1982 Conference, 350 delegates from seventy-seven departments filled Montreuil town hall in the suburbs of Paris.(77) Given the fact that MODEF had come this far without financial assistance from central government, very limited support from local government, and indeed had to overcome the hostility of successive governments, MODEF's success was remarkable. Not only had it continued to maintain a hand-to-mouth existence, it had become more and more organized in an ever-increasing number of departments. From inauspicious beginnings MODEF had become an established and officially recognized organization. How this was done will be dealt with in the succeeding chapters. Before this, however, the

growth of support for MODEF must be described. There are two ways in which this can be done - in terms of membership or in terms of success in the Chamber of Agriculture elections. But there are too many practical and theoretical problems to permit the number of members to be used as an indicator of MODEF success.

In the first place, the concept of membership is, in this context, extremely nebulous. MODEF has not overly concerned itself with formal distinctions between paid-up members and sympathizers (except for financial reasons), preferring rather to influence and mobilize farmers. The intensification of the working day makes greater and greater demands on the time of farmers, so fewer and fewer are available for activities off the farm. The constant appeals in L'Exploitant Familial for the return of membership registration forms and subscriptions suggest that the activists themselves have not been particularly motivated by the concern of signing up members. Action is more important than membership forms in their eyes. The problem is to mobilize rather than to organize farmers.(78)

This tendency is reinforced by the nature of union and professional organization generally in France. Just as the industrial unions have been described as "syndicats d'animation" as opposed to "syndicats de masse", MODEF is essentially an organization of militants who seek to mobilize the unorganized.(79) Furthermore, total membership as an indicator of influence is misleading, particularly since the agricultural population is in constant decline. Two potential situations may arise. A rise in membership may mask a decline in influence. For example, in a period of intense polarization, some sympathizers could be drawn into the organization whilst even more are

discouraged by the activities of the organization. More importantly, a fall in membership may hide an extension of influence. As more people have left agriculture, MODEF membership has declined in absolute terms.(80) At the same time, its percentage of the vote in professional elections increased until the 1979 elections. This is why MODEF itself judges its success in terms of electoral strength rather than recruitment figures. Given the imbalance between its resources and those of the FNSEA, and the costs which activism therefore imposes on the militants in terms of time and money, it believes that it is more valid for it to be judged in terms of popular support rather than organizational strength.

Finally, there is the practical difficulty of evaluating the accuracy of claims put forward by MODEF. Indeed given the attitude of the militants described above, the MODEF leadership has almost as much difficulty as anyone else in compiling figures. Tavernier fails to make any estimate whilst Tello's figure of 200,000 in 1979 is either a gross exaggeration (since MODEF claimed 75,000 in 1980) or a gross miscalculation.(81) There is a plausible explanation for such a miscalculation. Tello has been guilty of double counting. MODEF is not simply a confederation of departmental Federations but also of specialized organizations for particular groups of farmers, e.g. young farmers, cereals producers, the Comité de Défense de la Viticulture Charentaise covering the cognac producers of the Charente-Maritime, etc. Therefore members may have double or indeed multiple membership. Such a mistake could account for this enormous over-estimate.



MODEF's own claim of 75,000 members in 1980 is, of course, difficult to assess. However, it seems plausible. Given the low degree of participation in most voluntary organizations, such a figure is reasonable. This would represent six per cent of the 1.25 million farmers identified in the 1980 agricultural census. In a department such as the Charente with an unusually strong MODEF Federation and where a highly competitive situation exists between MODEF and the FNSEA Federation, agricultural officialdom estimates that twenty per cent of the farmers are paid-up members of MODEF with a similar number belonging to the FNSEA.(82) Therefore, one can reasonably assume that the degree of unionization is much lower in more normal departments. Furthermore, since MODEF won around twenty-five per cent of the vote in professional elections in the 1970s, six per cent does not seem an excessive membership claim - approximately one member to every four voters. However, an examination of the Chamber of Agriculture results will prove more rewarding than indulgence in a sterile and ultimately unverifiable investigation of membership figures.

Unfortunately, the professional election results themselves involve a practical problem. In theory, election results provide a precise and simple way of measuring the rise of MODEF. But in this case, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Assemblée Permanente des Presidents des Chambres d'Agriculture (APPCA) have extended the idea of the secret ballot to mean that the results should also be kept secret. Since the national results remain classified information, one has to rely on MODEF statistics. This is obviously not ideal but it remains the only possibility. Even if it was possible to visit every department, the cavalier attitude of most Chambers of Agriculture to old documents means that the results have often disappeared to the local rubbish dump rather

than to the Archives Departmentales. However, the MODEF figures are indirectly confirmed by the FNSEA-imposed blackout on the official returns - since publication would undermine their claim to the monopoly of farming representation. Where the possibility of checking MODEF figures with official electoral returns existed, as in the Charente, no significant divergences have been noted. The following outline of MODEF's electoral fortunes is therefore derived from the work of Tavernier and Tello as well as from L'Exploitant Familial.

Before examining the results of these elections, it is necessary to make a few preliminary remarks. Each department was divided into a certain number of constituencies, depending on the size of, and the number of farmers in, the department. For instance, there were six constituencies in the Charente - Angoulême-Nord, Angoulême-Sud, Barbezieux, Cognac, Confolens and Ruffec. The Vaucluse, by contrast, had only four - Apt, Avignon, Carpentras and Orange. These constituencies cut across Parliamentary constituency boundaries and corresponded roughly to the pre-1914 arrondissements. Each constituency elected four representatives. Candidates had to present themselves in slates of four. Farmers, their wives and relatives over eighteen years of age working on the farm, provided they were French or EEC citizens, had the right to vote. During the 1964-1979 period each voter had four votes, cast for individual candidates rather than slates. In general, there was not usually more than a thirty to fifty-vote gap between the most and the least popular candidate on each slate. To secure election, a relative majority was sufficient provided twenty-five per cent of the electorate turned out. The four candidates with the highest number of votes were elected. In closely fought elections, the gap between candidates on the same slate could mean that candidates from different

slates were elected, which explains the cases below where MODEF won less than four seats in a constituency.

In the majority of constituencies where MODEF contested elections, it was simply a straight fight between MODEF and the FNSEA. Therefore, the FNSEA vote was what remained after the MODEF vote was subtracted. The FNSEA majority in terms of votes has always been much less than its overwhelming majority in terms of seats. In certain constituencies, particularly in Normandy and the Loire Valley since 1970, MODEF found itself in three-cornered contests with FNSEA and the Federation Francaise de l'Agriculture (FFA). These constituencies have been identified below where necessary. Appendix A gives the results in map form.

Finally, given the fact that results have been published in percentage rather than absolute terms for each constituency, it is impossible to calculate averages for each department due to variations in constituency size and turnout. Given the constituency-based nature of the elections and the importance of personal leadership, such constituency figures are more revealing of the pattern of MODEF support. It should therefore be remembered that references to departments where MODEF has been successful refer to the performance of individual constituency slates, not to that of the Federation as a whole.

Tables 2:4 to 2:9 give details of MODEF's electoral performance over the period 1964-1979.

TABLE 2:4      MODEF PERFORMANCE CHAMBER OF AGRICULTURE RESULTS 1964

No.of Lists	No.of Departments with MODEF Lists	Seats	%Votes AllDepartments
71	21	38	4.2
<hr/>			
<u>Seats Won</u>			
4	Dax, Mont-de-Marsan I, Mont-de-Marsan II, St. Sever (Landes). Angoulême-Nord,Barbezieux, Ruffec (Charente)		
3	Blois (Loir-et-Cher)		
2	Orange (Vaucluse). La Châtre (Indre)		
1	Cognac (Charente). St Jean d'Angély, Marennes (Charente-Maritime)		
<hr/>			
<u>Seats won in alliance with other groups</u>			
4	Langon, Libourne (Gironde). Lavaur (Tarn)		
<hr/>			
<u>Departments with at least one MODEF list scoring 30% or more</u>			
Ain, Bouches-du-Rhône, Charente, Charente-Maritime, Corrèze, Finistère, Indre, Landes, Loir-et-Cher, Tarn, Vaucluse, Vienne, Yonne.			

Source: L'Exploitant Familial February 1964, F.Tello, 'Donnees sur l'Origine et l'Implantation du MODEF', Cahiers de l'Institut Maurice Thorez 28 (1978) 39-80 p.76

Though several of its leaders were old campaigners, 1964 was the first occasion upon which MODEF contested Chamber of Agriculture elections as an organization. Much to its surprise, MODEF was relatively successful, holding twenty-nine seats which its leaders had previously won and gaining a further nine. In alliance with other dissidents, another twelve seats in three constituencies were gained. This distinction is necessary since it is impossible to gauge the extent of MODEF support when it contested elections in such alliances. It is not clear which organization the electorate supported. Furthermore, there is also the problem of distinguishing MODEF candidates in joint slates since they may also have been members of the other organization in the alliance.(83)

The most significant aspect of this election was the concentration of MODEF successes in the south-west and in the Rhône Valley. Of the departments in which at least one MODEF list obtained thirty per cent of the vote, only three were north of the Loire. This, however, corresponded to the distribution of MODEF organization since only two other northern federations (Aube and Nord) were able to present candidates at all.

Table 2:5 shows the progress made by 1967. The 1967 elections marked a significant step forward for MODEF. Unlike 1964 when all the seats were up for election, only half the seats were renewable in 1967. Because of the reduced number of lists, MODEF was able to make an impact in a wider range of departments.

TABLE 2:5 MODEF PERFORMANCE CHAMBER OF AGRICULTURE RESULTS 1967

No. of Lists	No. of Departments With MODEF Lists	Seats	% Vote All Departments
63	38	24	13.1

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Seats won

4	St Jean d'Angély (Charente-Maritime). La Châtre (Indre). Dax (Landes). Bagnères-de-Bigorre (Haute-Pyrénées). Orange (Vaucluse). Montmorillon (Vienne).
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Seats won in alliance with other groups

4	Sisteron (Alpes de Haute Provence). Laval (Tarn). Langon (Gironde)
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Departments with at least one MODEF list scoring 25% or more

Ain, Ardèche, Aude, Aveyron, Bouches-du-Rhône, Charente, Charente-Maritime, Cher, Corrèze, Côtes-du-Nord, Finistère, Gard, Gironde, Ile-et-Vilaine, Indre, Indre-et-Loire, Isère, Jura, Landes, Loir-et-Cher, Morbihan, Nièvre, Orne, Pyrénées-Atlantique, Haute Pyrénées, Tarn, Vaucluse, Vienne, Yonne.

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Source: Tello. op cit p.76. Y.Tavernier 'Le MODEF', Revue Francaise de Science Politique, 18 (1968) 542-563 p. 547

Looking at the most successful campaigns, the imbalance between the south-west and the south-east was corrected to some extent by advances in the Provence-Côte d'Azur region and in the Alpine departments. Even more promising for MODEF was its successes north of the Loire, particularly in Brittany, and the confirmation of the 1964 showing in departments such as the Yonne and the Loir-et-Cher.(84)

Table 2:6 demonstrates the continued progression of MODEF support. The 1970 elections showed that MODEF had established itself as a permanent opposition to the FNSEA. In the sixty-four departments where it presented candidates, it achieved a total of 32.8 per cent of the votes cast. Once again the south-west was revealed as the dominant area in the MODEF electorate. From the Indre to the Landes and from the Pyrénées-Orientales to the Loire-Atlantique stretched a continuous band of territory where MODEF had performed extremely well. But the south-western base was fortified by the knowledge that MODEF had made great strides in Brittany, Normandy, Pays de la Loire and in the peripheral western and southern departments of the Paris basin. Similarly, of the ten departments of the Loire valley where MODEF presented candidates (the only exception being the Allier), MODEF lists obtained more than thirty per cent of the vote in eight. From the Loire-Atlantique to the Nièvre MODEF had a chain of relatively successful slates. Only in the north-east (with the exception of the Vosges) did MODEF fail to make an impact.

TABLE 2:6      MODEF PERFORMANCE CHAMBER OF AGRICULTURE RESULTS 1970

No. of Lists	No. of Departments With MODEF Lists	Seats	% Vote All Departments
126	64	35	21

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<u>Seats won</u>	
4	Arles II (Bouches-du-Rhône). Angoulême-Nord, Barbezieux, Ruffec (Charente). Guingamp (Côtes-du-Nord). Mont-de-Marsan I, St. Sever (Landes) St. Calais (Sarthe).
2	Les Andelys (Eure).
1	Corte (Corsica).

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<u>Seats won in alliance in alliance with other groups</u>	
4	Castellane, Digne (Alpes de Haute Provence). Gap (Haute Alpes).

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Departments with at least one MODEF list scoring 30% or more

Ain, Ardèche, Aveyron, Bouches-du-Rhône, Cantal, Charente, Charente-Maritime, Cher, Corrèze, Corsica, Côte d'Or, Côtes-du-Nord, Drôme, Eure, Finistère, Gers, Gironde, Hérault, Indre, Indre-et-Loire, Loiret, Loir-et-Cher, Maine-et-Loire, Manche, Nièvre, Pyrénées-Orientales, Saône-et-Loire, Sarthe, Savoie, Tarn, Tarn-et-Garonne, Vaucluse, Vienne, Vendée, Vosges, Yonne.

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Source: L'Exploitant Familial May 1970. Y. Tavernier Le MODEF in  
Tavernier et al l'Univers Politique des Paysans dans la France  
Contemporaine. p. 477

Table 2:7 deals with MODEF's performance in 1974.

TABLE 2:7 MODEF PERFORMANCE CHAMBER OF AGRICULTURE RESULTS 1974

No. of Lists	No. of Departments With MODEF Lists	Seats	% Vote All Departments
135	65	26	23

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Seats won

4	Nyons (Drôme). La Châtre (Indre) Dax (Landes) Chateau-Chinon (Nièvre). Apt, Orange (Vaucluse).
1	Brignolles (Var). Montmorillon (Var)

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Seats won in alliance with other groups

4	Barcelonnette, Fourcalquier (Alpes de Haute Provence). Carcassonne, Limoux (Aude). Brive (Correze). Bastia, Corte (Corsica). Alès (Gard).
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Departments with at least one MODEF list scoring 30% or more

Ain, Ardèche, Aube, Aveyron, Bouches-du-Rhône, Charente,  
Charente-Maritime, Cher, Corrèze, Côtes-du-Nord, Drôme,  
Eure, Eure-et-Loire, Finistère, Gard, Gers, Gironde,  
Ile-et-Vilaine, Indre, Landes, Loir-et-Cher, Loiret, Haute  
Loire, Lot, Lozère, Maine-et-Loire, Nièvre,  
Pyrénées-Orientales, Saône-et-Loire, Haute-Saône, Sarthe,  
Savoie, Haute Savoie, Deux Sèvres, Tarn, Tarn-et-Garonne,  
Var, Vaucluse, Vienne, Yonne.

Source: L'Exploitant Familial March 1974, Tello. op cit p.76.

The 1974 election confirmed that MODEF's success in 1970 was not a freak. Once again in the departments where it presented candidates, it secured thirty per cent of the vote. Given the fact that in approximately half the departments where it did not present candidates it did not do so because the local FNSEA Federation shared MODEF's policies, it would appear that between a third and a quarter of farmers endorsed the MODEF platform.(85) The south-west yet again accounted for a large part of the MODEF vote. Once more the west outweighed the east. North-east of the Loire only Burgundy offered any hospitality to MODEF though a freak result gave it forty per cent of the vote in the



Haute-Saone constituency of Lure. Similarly in the south-east, Provence Côte d'Azur remained MODEF's main source of strength. Like the Midi itself, it appeared that MODEF stopped at Montélimar.

Nevertheless, the result presented some worrying signs for MODEF. Though its position in Brittany was confirmed, MODEF suffered serious setbacks in Normandy, Pays de la Loire and in the Loire valley itself, largely thanks to the presence of a new right-wing opposition, the Federation Française de l'Agriculture (FFA). (Its role vis-a-vis MODEF is analyzed in detail in Chapter 6).

Table 2:8 shows the pattern of MODEF support in the 1976 elections. Overall, MODEF secured twenty-seven per cent of the votes cast in the departments in which it presented candidates.

**TABLE 2:8      MODEF PERFORMANCE CHAMBER OF AGRICULTURE RESULTS 1976**

No. of Lists	No. of Departments With MODEF Lists	Seats	% Vote All Departments
140	71	21	24
<hr/>			
<u>Seats won</u>			
4	Angoulême-Nord, Barbezieux (Charente) Gap (Haute Alpes). St. Sever (Landes) Gourdon (Lot)		
1	Montauban (Tarn-et-Garonne)		
<hr/>			
<u>Seats won in alliance</u>			
4	Castellane, Digne, Sisteron (Alpes de Haute Provence). Carcassonne, Narbonne (Aude).		
<hr/>			
<u>Departments with at least one MODEF list scoring 30% or more</u>			
Haute Alpes, Ardèche, Charente, Charente-Maritime, Cher, Corrèze, Côtes-du-Nord, Drôme, Eure-et-Loir, Finistère. Gard, Gers, Gironde, Hérault, Landes, Loir-et-Cher, Haute-Loire, Lot, Nièvre, Haute-Saône, Sarthe, Savoie, Tarn, Tarn-et-Garonne, Vaucluse, Vienne, Yonne			

Source: L'Exploitant Familial February 1976

This increase in MODEF's percentage of the total vote cast in the entire country resulted mainly from presenting more lists rather than from increased support in constituencies which it had previously contested. This is shown clearly by the fact that the slates reaching the thirty per cent barrier were more concentrated in the southern half of the country than in the elections of 1970 and 1974. Only in eight departments north of the Loire did MODEF reach this level compared to nineteen departments to the south. These elections also confirmed the FFA threat, particularly in the Loire valley where MODEF's early successes could no longer be repeated.

Finally, Table 2:9 shows the relative setback suffered by MODEF in 1979. For the first time MODEF failed to progress. Largely as a result of the political repercussions of the end of the Union of the Left, MODEF's vote fell by four per cent. The most dramatic manifestation of the defeat occurred in the Vaucluse where MODEF, having had a constant presence since 1964 and a near overall majority in 1974, was totally eliminated from the Chamber of Agriculture. However, despite the overall setback, there were more lists in the thirty per cent-plus bracket than in 1976. Brittany and Burgundy maintained their place as MODEF's bridgeheads in the north although a good result was obtained for the first time in the Pas-de-Calais at Arras. The south-west once again retained its pre-eminence with Provence-Côte d'Azur as the south-eastern base. Finally, it appears that certain Federations which seemed to be in decline were given a new lease of life by sectarian politics - e.g. the Rhône and Haute-Pyrénées.

TABLE 2:9      MODEF PERFORMANCE CHAMBER OF AGRICULTURE RESULTS 1979

No. of Lists	No. of Departments With MODEF Lists	Seats	% Vote All Departments
140	68	12	20
<hr/>			
<u>Seats won</u>			
4	Nyons (Drôme). Dax (Landes) Chateau-Chinon (Nièvre).		
<hr/>			
<u>Seats won in alliance with other groups</u>			
4	Limoux (Aude). Sète (Hérault).		
<hr/>			
<u>Departments with at least one MODEF list scoring 30% or more</u>			
Ain, Alpes de Haute Provence, Ardèche, Aude, Bouches-du-Rhône, Charente, Charente-Maritime, Corrèze, Côtes-du-Nord, Drôme, Eure-et-Loir, Finistère, Gers, Gironde, Hérault, Ile-et-Vilaine, Indre, Landes, Loire, Lot, Lozère, Pas-de-Calais, Haute-Pyrénées, Nièvre, Rhône, Saône-et-Loire, Savoie, Tarn, Tarn-et-Garonne, Var, Vaucluse, Yonne.			

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Source: L'Exploitant Familial February 1979

## 8. CONCLUSION

Some trends in MODEF's electoral fortunes can be identified. Its electorate is characterized by the co-existence of a hard core and a highly unstable body of supporters. The extent of hard core support has been measured by isolating the departments in which MODEF slates have obtained thirty per cent of the vote in every election since 1970. The thirty per cent figure has been chosen since this has been the average level of support in the departments contested by MODEF during the 1970-1979 period. 1970 has been chosen as the base date since virtually all the MODEF Federations had been created and were in a position to present candidates by that date.

MODEF's hard core has been located in the south-west (Poitou-Charentes, Aquitaine and Midi-Pyrénées) and to a lesser extent in Provence Côte d'Azur, Brittany and Burgundy. Seventeen departments have been identified in this category - Ardèche, Charente, Charente-Maritime, Côtes-du-Nord, Drôme, Eure-et-Loir, Finistère, Gers, Gironde, Landes, Lot, Nièvre, Savoie, Tarn, Tarn-et-Garonne, Vaucluse and Yonne. Even when one adds the nine departments in which MODEF passed the thirty per cent barrier on three occasions out of four (Ain, Bouches-du-Rhône, Cher, Hérault, Loir-et-Cher, Loiret, Saône-et-Loire, Haute-Savoie and Vienne), it is clear that MODEF has never quite transcended its original geographical limitations. Such a view is reinforced by the fact that the three most electorally successful Federations all date from the earliest days of the organization, the Landes and Charente Federations being founder members whilst that of the Vaucluse was established in 1960. Similarly, of the top seventeen Federations identified above, MODEF was sufficiently well organized in eleven of them to be able to contest the 1964 elections.

These twenty-six departments, nevertheless, only account for about half the fifty-one departments where one or more MODEF lists have obtained thirty per cent of the vote in at least one election. Outside the core areas, MODEF success has tended to be fleeting. This instability becomes even more apparent when one considers the difficulties which MODEF has experienced in holding the seats which it has won. In its own right MODEF has won a total of 156 seats in twenty-five constituencies in nineteen departments since 1964. With its allies, it has won 104 seats in eighteen constituencies in ten departments. In fact over the period 1964-1979, MODEF only held four constituencies on a permanent basis - Angoulême-Nord, Barbezieux, Dax and St. Sever. Even with the addition of the constituencies in which it won seats at least twice (St. Jean d'Angély, Mont-de-Marsan, Orange, La Châtre, Nyons, Chateau-Chinon and Montmorillon), there were only eleven constituencies upon which MODEF managed to maintain more than a fleeting grip. This is less than half the number of constituencies in which it won seats. As for the eighteen constituencies where seats were won in alliance with other groups, only seven were won more than once. (Alès, Castellane, Digne, Langon, Lavaur, Limoux and Sisteron)

The reasons for this electoral volatility will emerge in each of the following chapters. Chapter 3 deals with the bases of support for MODEF with reference to detailed case studies of the Charente and the Vaucluse. Apart from the factors isolated in Chapters 1 and 2 the importance of the rivalry between the local leaderships of MODEF and the FNSEA is examined. This is followed by Chapter 4 in which MODEF's organizational weakness and the lack of institutionalization within the organization is considered. As a consequence MODEF depends more on the loyalty of its activists and the personal loyalty of supporters to the

activists rather than on material incentives to retain its electoral strength. Similarly Chapter 5 is an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of MODEF's ideology and the implications of the ideology for the operation of MODEF.

The final three chapters are concerned with the external factors governing MODEF influence. In Chapter 6, MODEF's conflict with the FNSEA, and with other groups such as the FFA, and its limited role within the agri-complex are considered. Chapter 7 is a study of the relationship of MODEF to the party system and the impact of political parties on MODEF. In particular, the connection between the setback of 1979 and the end of the Union of the Left is made. Finally, Chapter 8 deals with MODEF and the state with particular reference to the state's inhibiting effect on the growth of MODEF.

### CHAPTER 3 COMPARATIVE MICRO-POLITICS: TWO CASE STUDIES

#### 1. Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the effects of agricultural modernization upon the departments of the Charente and the Vaucluse. After showing the similarities and contrasts between the two departments and the extent to which national developments have been reflected in these departments, a more concrete picture of the factors which provide MODEF with its *raison d'être* will emerge.

The next step is to take the micro-political analysis one step further and look at the variations within each department. The economic, sociological and political variations between and within the two departments are examined in order to explain variations in MODEF strength. Particular attention is paid to the role of the PCF. Once this has been done, it becomes possible to assess whether MODEF exists because farmers in very different parts of the country face similar problems or whether MODEF is simply a flag of convenience for disparate groups and grievances.

There are several reasons for the choice of the Charente and the Vaucluse as the subjects of this in-depth study. In the first place, any study conducted with limited resources makes the choice of the Charente inevitable since the national headquarters of MODEF are located in Angoulême. This permitted the analysis of the national organization to proceed in tandem with a departmental study. Secondly, both departments concerned are amongst those with the largest Federations, thus permitting the collection of a wider range of information whilst avoiding the danger of concentrating on the largest and completely

untypical Federation, that of the Landes.

There are also a series of reasons for this choice which are related to the degree of difference between and within the departments. Not only do both departments differ from each other in terms of the type of agriculture practised but there are substantial variations within each one. The Charente, in particular, is a microcosm of French agriculture, containing vineyards, cereal farming, dairy farming, cattle raising and polycultural farming. Furthermore, the Vaucluse and the Charente have very different political traditions. The Charente's centre-right tradition of accommodation with the occupants of central government provides a clear contrast with the leftism of the Vaucluse and its acute inter-left rivalry. Finally, the MODEF Federations differ in that the Charente Federation was one of the FNSEA Federations expelled in the 1950s whilst the Vaucluse Federation was constructed from scratch by dissidents who broke away from the FDSEA in 1960.

One other methodological issue must be settled at the outset. It has become standard practice to preface sub-national studies with a dispute about the unit of analysis, i.e. departments, traditional regions, cantons, communes, etc.(1) Although a supporter of the departmentalist approach, Judt has warned against its dangers:

The organization of historical evidence of all kinds into departmental categories can easily lead to a departmental reading of the local experience which may ignore or even distract from more 'real' or 'natural' parameters.(2)



This is the basis on which this chapter proceeds. Rather than quarrel about the ideal unit, the unit of analysis must depend on the subject of analysis. Three types of real parameters are employed. Chamber of Agriculture constituencies are used in the analysis of the distribution of MODEF support whilst agricultural economies are examined from the perspective of the officially delimited agricultural regions. Political considerations are dealt with by Parliamentary constituency. Sub-divisions such as the commune and canton are utilized where necessary to refine the analysis.

## 2. AGRICULTURAL MODERNIZATION IN THE CHARENTE AND THE VAUCLUSE

As in the rest of France, the farmers of the Charente and the Vaucluse have been faced with the triple pressures of the state, agro-industry and the EEC. These pressures, as elsewhere in the country, have led to greater investment and mechanization combined with reductions in the labour force and intensification of labour for those who remain on the land.

In the Charente, the peak period of mechanization was the late 1950s and early 1960s, a period which coincides with the formative years of MODEF. Between 1955 and 1970, the number of tractors employed for agricultural purposes in the department increased from approximately 7,500 to 19,538. Similarly, between 1963 and 1970, the number of combine harvesters in use in the department increased from 910 to 1812. Though the pace of modernization slackened in the 1970s, it still continued as witnessed by the rise in the number of tractors to 22,894 by 1979 and by the introduction of the grape harvesting machine, of which 120 were to be found in use in 1979.(3)

Parallel developments took place in the Vaucluse. The number of tractors in use rose from 6,050 in 1955 to 14,140 by 1970. Progress was less rapid in the 1970s as the figure rose slightly to 16,984 by 1979. Investment in fixed capital also rose dramatically in this period. Whilst cold stores and greenhouses were almost unknown in 1955, there was a storage capacity of 160,000 cubic metres by 1970, rising to 235,000 by 1979. Italian competition provided the impetus for the rapid spread of the use of greenhouses in the 1970s, the acreage under cover rising from thirty-three hectares to 311 hectares between 1970 and 1980.(4)

The number of tractors provides the most convenient indicator for comparison between the two departments and the national average. The percentage increase in the period 1955-1979 for France as a whole is 495% . The figure for the Charente is 205% whilst that for the Vaucluse is 181%. It is clear, therefore, that neither of these departments has been amongst those most drastically transformed by mechanization.

If we turn our attention to the other side of the coin, there is a difference between the two departments. The level of debt in French agriculture has, as we have seen, increased dramatically, particularly since the late 1960s. In the Poitou-Charentes region, Credit Agricole lending to farmers increased from 2,729 million francs in 1969 to 13,623 million in 1979, an annual increase of 17.4 per cent. This made the region the fifth most indebted in the country. By contrast, Provence Côte d'Azur, in which the Vaucluse is situated, was at the other end of the scale. From 3,441 million francs in 1969, Credit Agricole lending to farmers increased to 11,162 million in 1979, an annual increase of only twelve per cent.(5)

TABLE 3.1 RURAL EXODUS IN THE CHARENTE AND VAUCLUSE 1954-1979

POPULATION	CHARENTE		VAUCLUSE			FRANCE	
	1954	1979	%CHANGE	1954	1979	%CHANGE	%CHANGE
1. TOTAL	313,635	337,595	+7.6	268,356	390,446	+45	+32
2. AGRICULTURAL	98,920	54,685	-45	59,975	40,792	-31	-54
3. 2 AS % OF 1	31	16	-48	22	10	-55	-58
4. ACTIVE AGRICULTURAL	58,100	31,560	-54	35,200	31,766	-10	-54
5. FARMERS	27,540	19,075	-30	17,934	12,867	-28	-34
6. FAMILY LABOUR	30,560	8,499	-72	17,266	5,654	-67	-68
7. HIRED LABOUR							
A) FULL-TIME	8,600	4,721	-45	5,200	4,130	-20	-67
B) PART-TIME	1,600	2,182	+36	2,000	4,278	+113	-80

Source: Recensement General de la Population 1954, Recensement General de la Population 1975, Recensement General de l'Agriculture 1954, Recensement General de l'Agriculture 1979-1980

Along with mechanization and borrowing came the need to rationalize the labour force. Table 3:1 details the changes which have taken place. In both departments, the decline in the agricultural population has been below the national average. However, whilst the decline in the active agricultural population has been extremely small in the Vaucluse, the decline in the Charente has reflected the national trend. On the other hand, the decline in the number of farmers and family members working on the farm has been relatively similar in each department. The two departments are both remarkable by their relatively heavy use of full and part-time labour (explainable partly by the requirements of the grape harvest). This suggests that the two departments have not been as drastically transformed by the modernization of agriculture as other less favoured departments.

Rationalization of the labour force has been accompanied by rationalization of farm structure. Concentration has taken place as fewer farms compete for the extra land necessary to their mechanized operations profitable. In the Charente, approximately 11,500 farms have disappeared since 1955, the majority (8,000) disappearing between 1955 and 1970.(6) Between 1955 and 1979, more than half the farms under ten hectares disappeared or were enlarged. The number of farms between ten and twenty hectares has fallen by two-thirds whilst the number of farms over fifty hectares has tripled between 1955 and 1979. Given the fact that the total area of land in agricultural use has remained more or less stable, the average size of farm therefore increased from fifteen hectares in 1955 to twenty hectares in 1970 and to twenty-five hectares in 1980.(7) Furthermore, though more than half of Charentais farms cover less than twenty hectares, they only occupy seventeen per cent of agricultural land whilst the twelve per cent of farms over fifty hectares occupy thirty-seven per cent of the land.(8) These

developments have made the average size of farm in the Charente slightly above the national average of 23.4 hectares but the rate of change has been average. In this respect, the Charente is not remarkable.

There are difficulties in trying to compare the degree of concentration in different departments because of differences in types of agriculture.

The highly intensive nature of agriculture in the Vaucluse means that the average size of farm, as well as the size of the large farm, is much smaller than in the Charente. Nevertheless, similar changes are apparent in Vaucluse agriculture. During the period 1955-1979, 6,100 farms disappeared, 2,900 between 1955 and 1970 and the remainder during the 1970s. The main victim of this process has been the operator of the farm with less than ten hectares, particularly those in the five to ten hectare category. The decline in the number of farms between ten and twenty hectares has been less rapid whilst the principal beneficiaries of concentration have been those farming between twenty and fifty hectares. However, because of the decline in available agricultural land, the average size of farm only increased from 9.6 hectares in 1955 to eleven hectares in 1979. Though the 13.5 per cent of farms of more than twenty hectares occupy forty-seven per cent of agricultural land, the pace of concentration in the Vaucluse has been far below the national average.(9) Tables 3:2 and Tables 3:3 show the progression of concentration since 1955.

TABLE 3:2 CONCENTRATION IN THE CHARENTE 1955-1979

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>1955</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1979</u>
<u>FARM SIZE</u>	<u>NUMBER OF FARMS IN EACH CATEGORY</u>		
Less than 10 ha	11,739	6,816	5,243
10-20 ha	8,926	4,857	3,099
20-50 ha	6,220	6,555	5,763
50-100 ha	587	1,205	1,724
100-200 ha	59	126	219
More than 200 ha	9	17	27

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 Source: Recensement General de l'Agriculture 1979-1980: La  
 Charente  
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TABLE 3:3 CONCENTRATION IN THE VAUCLUSE 1955-1979

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>1955</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1979</u>
<u>FARM SIZE</u>	<u>NUMBER OF FARMS IN EACH CATEGORY</u>		
Less than 1 ha	1,015	1,257	1,096
1-2 ha	1,762	1,588	1,393
2-5 ha	5,160	3,517	2,743
5-10	5,208	3,823	2,887
10-20	3,328	3,282	2,991
20-35 ha	{ {1,241	1,119	1,218
35-50 ha	{	232	285
More than 50 ha	220	233	254

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 Recensement General de l'Agriculture 1979-1980: Le Vaucluse  
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Perhaps the greatest contrast of all between the two departments is the income difference. In the Charente the goal of parity with urban incomes has remained as illusory and as obtainable as it has proved in the rest of France. In the Vaucluse, the position has been much more favorable. Two comparisons need to be made. On the one hand, there is the problem of regional variations in agricultural incomes. On the other hand, the question of the relationship between agricultural and non-agricultural incomes within specific regions. In both cases, the farmers of the Vaucluse have occupied a much more comfortable position than their colleagues in the Charente.

TABLE 3:4 AGRICULTURAL INCOMES CHARENTE AND VAUCLUSE 1970-1978

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>CHARENTE</u> <u>(Francs)</u>	<u>CHARENTE AS %</u> <u>OF FRANCE</u>	<u>VAUCLUSE</u> <u>(Francs)</u>	<u>VAUCLUSE AS %</u> <u>FRANCE</u>
1970	16,248	91.3	44,642	150.7
1971	19,718	98.0	43,571	156.0
1972	18,538	75.2	41,589	168.7
1973	28,667	102.6	33,872	168.4
1974	29,476	101.1	41,386	142.0
1975	24,921	77.9	39,343	123.0
1976	34,279	100.5	44,081	127.1
1977	26,771	70.2	70,679	187.3
1978	25,965	63.0	65,834	160.8

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Source: Les Disparites de Revenus en Agriculture, SCEES, No. 22, 1979  
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Table 3:4 provides details of comparative agricultural incomes. As has already been pointed out in Chapter 2, such figures should be regarded with a certain degree of suspicion. This is particularly so in the case of the Charente since fluctuations in cognac stocks are assumed to be reflected in farm incomes which is not true in practice. Nevertheless, the figures provide a reasonable guide to fluctuations in income and to regional variations. It would therefore appear that Charente farmers have normally received an income which has varied from substantially below the national average to about average. The department is therefore one which is relatively underprivileged but which has not suffered from the more extreme deprivation experienced in the neighbouring departments of the Massif Central. The Vaucluse, on the other hand, has been one of the most successful departments in the entire country.

A similar contrast is visible between the two departments when one considers the relationship between agricultural and industrial incomes. In the Poitou-Charentes region, the industrial wage index rose from 100 in January 1974 to 200.7 in December 1978. Over the same period, the RBE index for the Charente fell from 100 to 88.1. In monetary terms, in 1978 the regional average wage in light engineering, which predominates in Angoulême, amounted to 33,352 francs. This compared favourably with the average farm income of 25,965 francs.(10)

The average Vaucluse farmer was in a much more favorable position. Over the same period, the Provence Côte d'Azur regional industrial wage index rose by 62.5 points whereas the RBE index rose by fifty-nine. Furthermore, the 65,834 francs average farm income compared extremely favorably with the 39,852 francs of the average food processing industry



worker and even with the 65,472 francs of the average power worker. Nevertheless, this optimistic picture should be tempered by the knowledge of the insecurity of income revealed by Table 3:4.(11)

These divergences show that reductionism is of limited value. Though the Charente and the Vaucluse have undergone similar social and economic changes, the pace of change and the ratio between costs and benefits of change has been very different. In order to understand how MODEF has been able to attract similar levels of support in such different departments, the micro-analysis must be taken much further. A detailed analysis of the agricultural economies and the political sub-systems of each of the two departments with particular emphasis on the contrasts within each department is required.

### 3. THE CHARENTE

The Charente is a department of 5,596 square kilometres, divided into four main agricultural regions, six Chamber of Agriculture constituencies, three Parliamentary constituencies and thirty-three cantons.

Before proceeding any further, it is necessary to illustrate the pattern of MODEF support. The following series of maps (Maps 3:1 to 3:4) show the communes in which MODEF secured a majority in the Chamber of Agriculture elections held between 1964 and 1979.

MAP 3:1 CHAMBER OF AGRICULTURE ELECTIONS: CHARENTE 1964



Source C I B U

LEGEND: MODEF majorities

Constituency Boundaries

Canton Boundaries

SOURCE: CHAMBRE D'AGRICULTURE DE LA CHARENTE



Source C O B

LEGEND: MODEP majorities

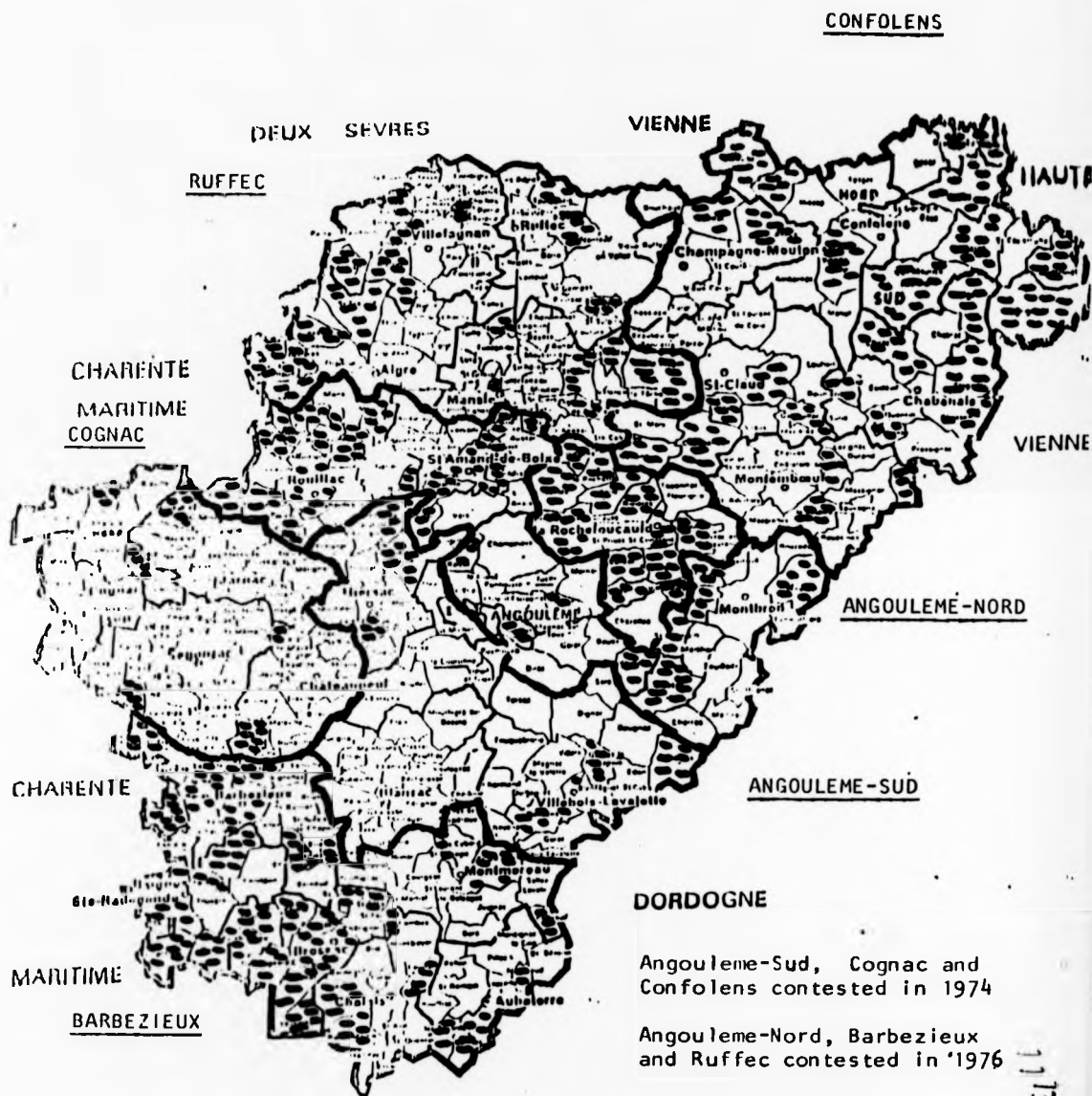
33

Constituency Boundaries

Canton Boundaries

SOURCE: CHAMBRE D'AGRICULTURE DE LA CHARENTE

MAP 3:3 CHAMBER OF AGRICULTURE ELECTIONS: CHARENTE 1974-1976



Echelle  
0 10 km

LEGEND: MODEP majorities



Constituency Boundaries

Canton Boundaries

SOURCE: CHAMBRE D'AGRICULTURE DE LA CHARENTE

Map 3:1 deals with the election of 1964 in which all the seats in the department were up for election. MODEF secured an average of fifty per cent over the six constituencies with results ranging from forty-five per cent in Angoulême-Sud to sixty-five per cent in Angoulême-Nord. In terms of seats, this success gave MODEF victory in the constituencies of Angoulême-Nord, Barbezieux and Ruffec. As this map shows, MODEF's strongholds were the cantons of Rouillac, St. Amant de Boixe, La Rochefoucauld and Montbron. It also achieved a reasonable degree of support in Brossac, Baignes, Jarnac, Chabanais, Villefagnan and Ruffec.

Map 3:2 demonstrates MODEF's performance in the 1967 and 1970 elections. The three seats contested in 1967 were those in which it had been at its weakest in 1964 whilst those contested in 1970 were those it had won in 1964. In 1967, MODEF obtained forty-one per cent of the votes cast with a high of forty-three per cent in Confolens and with a low of thirty-seven per cent in Cognac. No seats were won. MODEF's main areas of support in this election were the cantons of Jarnac, Chabanais and to a lesser extent Confolens-Sud.

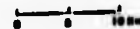
In the three more favorable constituencies contested in 1970, MODEF secured a total of fifty-one per cent of the vote and retained its seats. This success was heavily dependent on the support of the farmers of Rouillac, St. Amant de Boixe, Villefagnan, Ruffec, Baignes, Brossac and Aubeterre.

Map 3:3 depicts the results of the elections held in 1974 and 1976. In the 1974 election, MODEF obtained thirty-eight per cent of the vote with forty-five per cent in Confolens, twenty-eight per cent in Cognac and forty per cent in Angoulême-Sud. The major contributions to the MODEF total came from the cantons of Chabanais, Confolens-Sud and La

MAP 3:4 CHAMBER OF AGRICULTURE ELECTIONS: CHARENTE 1979



Echelle



LEGEND: MODEF majorities



Constituency Boundaries

Canton Boundaries

Source: C. H. H.

SOURCE: CHAMBRE D'AGRICULTURE DE LA CHARENTE

Rochefoucauld.

In 1976 MODEF managed to hold eight of its twelve seats but lost those it had previously held in the Ruffec constituency. The decline in MODEF support in Villefagnan and Ruffec was accompanied by less spectacular declines in Aigre and Mansle. In the other constituencies MODEF was forced into an even heavier reliance on strongholds such as Rouillac, Baignes and Brossac. In all MODEF obtained forty-six per cent of the votes cast with a peak of fifty-two per cent in Angoulême-Nord and forty-three per cent in both the other constituencies. (The presence of a third slate presented by the FFA permitted MODEF to hold the Barbezieux seats despite the lack of an absolute majority).

Map 3:4 once again demonstrates a further increase in the concentration of the MODEF vote. Cantons such as La Rochefoucauld and Chabanais became more and more essential to MODEF. These two cantons accounted for a quarter of the communes with MODEF majorities in 1979. They also contributed seventeen per cent of the total MODEF vote in the three constituencies. Overall MODEF obtained forty per cent of the vote with forty-four per cent in Confolens, forty-one per cent in Angoulême-Sud and thirty-five per cent in Cognac.

Finally, Map 3:5 shows the communes which have given a majority of their votes to MODEF on every possible occasion. As this map shows, the traditional bastions of MODEF support are Brossac, Baignes and Rouillac. These have been closely followed by La Rochefoucauld, Chabanais and St. Amant de Boixe.(12) On the other hand, MODEF attracted a very limited degree of support in cantons such as Blanzac, Champagne Mouton and above all Segonzac.



MAP 3:5 MODEP STRONGHOLDS: CHARENTE 1964-1979




Echelle

0 5 10 km

Source: C. H. B. H.

LEGEND: MODEP majorities 

Constituency Boundaries 

Canton Boundaries 

SOURCE: CHAMBRE D'AGRICULTURE DE LA CHARENTE



MAP 3:6 MODEF STRONGHOLDS AND AGRICULTURAL REGIONS: CHARENTE



Source: C. H. H.

SOURCE: CHAMBRE D'AGRICULTURE DE LA CHARENTE

Such contrasts in the electoral geography of MODEF reflect the different types of agricultural economy and of political organization which exist, and which have existed, within the department. After these differences have been examined, the pattern of clusters and dispersion witnessed by Map 3:5 will be shown to have a rational rather than a random basis.

#### 4. AGRICULTURAL REGIONS AND AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY

There are four main agricultural regions in the Charente. The Cognacais is, of course, dominated by the production of cognac whilst the Angoumois-Ruffecoais is largely devoted to cereal farming. The Confolentais is a beef, lamb and pork-producing region whilst the Montmorelien farmers engage in polycultural farming but in which dairy farming is the major activity.(13)

Each of these forms of agriculture has specific problems related to the nature of the production process, the level of demand and organization in each market. For example, the importance of the difference between an organized market in private hands, an organized market dominated by co-operatives and a disorganized market in private hands will become apparent in the next few pages.

A) THE COGNAC INDUSTRY Despite the extent of technological innovation on the farm, the transformation of the grape harvest into cognac has remained virtually unchanged for several centuries. Once the grapes have been pressed the wine is distilled by the farmer himself or by one of the small distilleries to be found in the region.(14) The method of

distillation, perfected in the sixteenth century, requires seven litres of wine for one bottle of cognac, intense labour for approximately a week every year and the use of skills which are usually inherited rather than acquired. The resulting product is poured into large barrels of Limousin oak where it is allowed to mature for anything between two and a half and ten years depending on the quality required.(15)

The complex and long-term nature of the production process helps to explain the dominant position of the cognac merchants such as Hennessy and Martell within the industry. Although production can be carried out on a small scale, the ageing process requires heavy investment. The inadequate financial resources of most farmers limit the extent to which they can age their own cognac in order to reap the financial benefits which accrue from the ageing process. Furthermore, the control which the merchants exercise over the stocks allows them to produce higher quality cognac since the best produce is normally a blend of cognacs from the various "crus". Given that quality has been the main aspect of the product's market appeal, the scope for individual and co-operative enterprise in marketing has been limited. The fact that the cognac market has been traditionally an export rather than a domestic one has cemented the dominance of the merchants.

Until recent years the international marketing strategy has been combined with an insular firm structure. Until the 1960s and 1970s cognac firms were family businesses conducted on paternalistic lines. Indeed the smaller firms still tend to operate in this way. Since then the larger firms have expanded into other areas either through marketing agreements or mergers. For example, Martell is linked to Champagne Mercier and markets Benedictine, Sandeman Port, Black and

White Whisky, etc. Hennessey have similar connections with Moet-Chandon and Teachers. The Jarnac firm of Bisquit has been taken over by the Ricard empire whilst on a smaller scale Remy Martin and Cointreau have joined forces for marketing purposes.(16)

With stagnation in the cognac market since 1973, competition between these firms has become much more ferocious. Those most prepared for ruthless competition have been able to outstrip their rivals and increase their share of the market. The most successful firms in this respect have been Remy Martin and Martell.(17)

Apart from a more aggressive marketing strategy the way chosen to maintain profitability has been an effort to squeeze the suppliers of the raw material. This has been done in two ways. On the one hand, there has been an effort to place the burden of the ageing process on the farmer by cutting back on purchases of new cognac and thereby reducing the level of stocks held by the firms. On the other hand, the merchants have placed constant pressure on the Bureau National Interprofessionnel du Cognac (BNIC) to relax its regulation of the market. There has been overt pressure on the BNIC to liberalize purchasing regulations in order to allow firms to exercise greater freedom of choice in purchasing from different "crus". This was designed to allow them to purchase as much of the top quality Grande et Petite Champagne "crus" as they wished and to reduce their obligation to absorb the products of the other "crus" to the absolute minimum required for blending. Less honestly, there have been widespread violations (allegedly by the smaller firms rather than by the household names) of the price levels and payment periods laid down by the BNIC.

Yet another policy adopted by the merchants has been an attempt to bring about vertical integration in the industry by acquiring their own vineyards. This has only taken place to a limited extent for two reasons. In the first place, the context of the cognac crisis meant that vertical integration, an effective way of increasing control in a period of expansion, was no longer profitable. The crisis meant that the interests of the merchants were best served by entering the production and ageing cycle as late as possible. Secondly, the hostility of farmers threatened the peace of the region. For instance, in 1976, one of the cognac firms was accused of exceeding planting quotas on its estates. The popular impact of a MODEF commando raid to uproot the offending vines provided a clear indication of the dangers of the vertical integration policy.

As in many other sectors of agriculture, the dominant position of private capital has led to attempts to defend the interests of farmers through the establishment of co-operatives. But the conditions which created the subordination of the farmer apply just as much to co-operatives. The traditional skills of the "maitre de chais", the heavy capital investment involved, the entrenched positions of long established firms in a largely international market are severe obstacles to co-operative as well as individual venture. Given the hostility of the merchants to the co-operatives their role has remained limited. In 1978 they accounted for a mere eleven per cent of production and barely six per cent of sales.(18) In fact most of these sales were made to the merchants rather than to consumers. In effect, the co-operatives have acted as production and storage co-operatives rather than as rivals to the merchants.

Cognac producers have faced further difficulties stemming from national and EEC policy, both in terms of taxation and agricultural policy. The ideology of "quality" and the luxury good image given to cognac by its publicists played into the hands of successive governments. Cognac has therefore been used as a source of government revenue through the imposition of heavy duties. By 1980, 43.7 per cent of the retail price of a bottle of three star cognac was composed of VAT and excise duty.(19)

Although the EEC proved beneficial by providing a wider market, the traditional markets continued to absorb the vast majority of sales. Since the traditional markets consisted of the UK and the US, the EEC cannot be said to be responsible for the expansion in sales. Furthermore, the major growth markets in the 1970s were located in the Far East, particularly Japan and Hong Kong. In reality, the EEC has proved more of a threat than an opportunity for the cognac industry. For example, in 1980 the European Court of Justice ruled that discriminatory taxation of imported alcoholic beverages, such as whisky, was illegal. The Barre government responded by increasing taxes on cognac and reducing customs duty on whisky in the 1981 Budget, a Budget which provoked a storm of protest in the region.(20)

The effects of such developments are shown by the decline in the number of farmers in the region by thirty-eight per cent over the period 1955-1980. The 1970s alone showed a 13.5 per cent diminution in the number of farmers.(21) As these departures took place, they were accompanied by concentration. Table 3:5 gives details of the extent of concentration in all four regions of the Charente. In the absence of statistics on income levels within the department, a crude measure of the financial impact of the cognac crisis has to be employed. Graph

TABLE 3:5 CONCENTRATION BY AGRICULTURAL REGION: CHARENTE 1955-1970

<u>REGION</u>	<u>FARM SIZE</u>		
	0-20 ha No. of farms as % of total)	20-50 ha	50+
<u>COGNACAI</u>			
1955	75	22	3
1970	61	33	6
-----			
<u>CONFOLENTAIS</u>			
1955	7	19	4
1970	62	30	8
-----			
<u>ANGOUMOIS-RUFFECOIS</u>			
1955	76	23	1
1970	60	32	8
-----			
<u>MONTMORELIEN</u>			
1955	72	26	2
1970	52	40	8
-----			
Source: Recensement General de l'Agriculture 1955: Caracteristiques Generaux des Exploitations, Recensement General de l'Agriculture 1970: Fascicules Departementaux.			
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TABLE 3:5a CONCENTRATION IN THE CHARENTE 1980

<u>REGION</u>	<u>FARM SIZE</u>			
	0-10 ha (No. of farms as % of total)	10-30 ha	30-50 ha	50+ ha
COGNACAI	31	43	17	9
CONFOLENTAIS	33	40	26	12
ANGOUMOIS-RUFFECOIS	40	27	18	15
MONTMORELIEN	26	38	19	14
-----				
Recensement General de l'Agriculture 1979-1980: La Charente				

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1955	75	22	3
1970	61	33	6

CONFOLENTAIS

1955	7	19	4
1970	62	30	8

ANGOUMOIS-RUFFECOIS

1955	76	23	1
1970	60	32	8

MONTMORELIEN

1955	72	26	2
1970	52	40	8

Source: Recensement General de l'Agriculture 1955:  
Caracteristiques Generaux des Exploitations,  
Recensement General de l'Agriculture 1970: Fascicules  
Departementaux.

TABLE 3:5a CONCENTRATION IN THE CHARENTE 1980

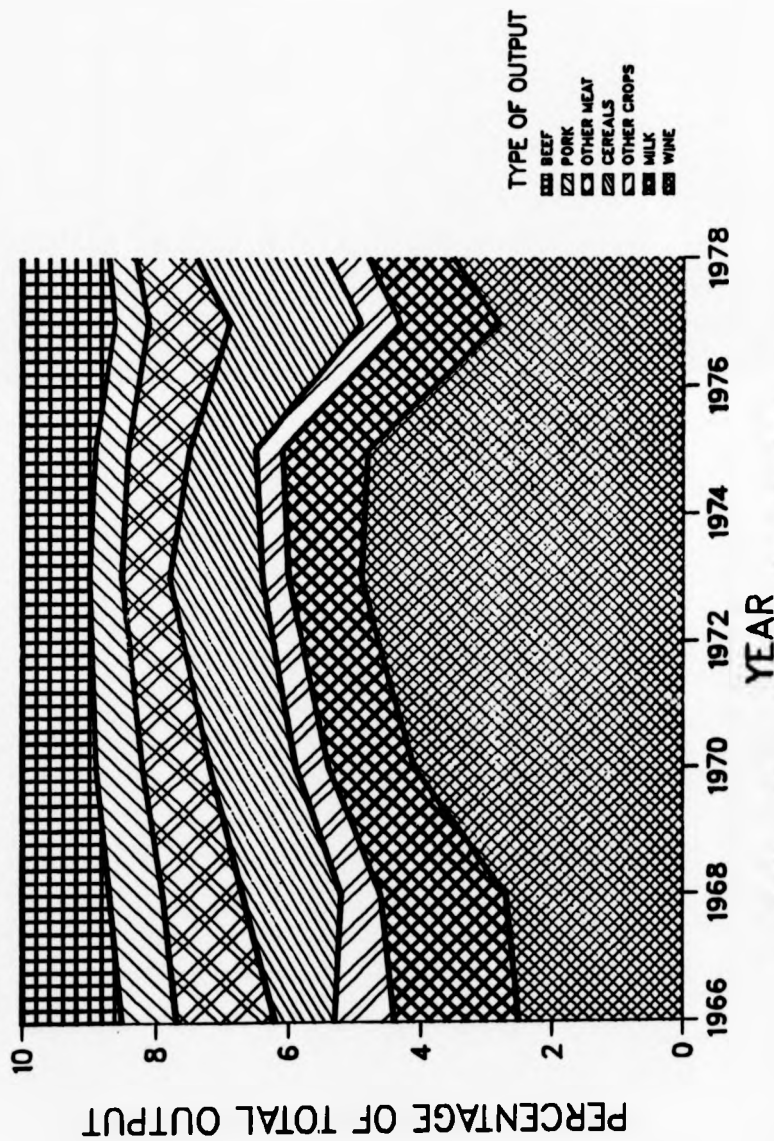
<u>REGION</u>	<u>FARM SIZE</u>			
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Recensement General de l'Agriculture 1979-1980: La Charente



3:1 shows the evolution of the share of final output by produce within the department over the period 1973-1978. Cognac has clearly suffered the most drastic change, its share falling from forty-nine per cent in 1973 to twenty-eight per cent in 1977 with a limited recovery in 1978. Moreover, these developments have had uneven effects in different parts of the region. Certain areas have had much less severe difficulties than others. For example, the cantons of Chateauneuf and Segonzac, the two richest in the department, experienced a slower rate of exodus after the onset of the cognac crisis than average and a substantially slower rate than one of the worst affected cantons, Hiersac. Production of cognac has become increasingly concentrated in the central zones of the official delimited cognac zone. Although most of the department is officially considered to be part of the zone (all except the Confolentais and the Ruffec area), cognac is no longer commercially produced east of the line Ruffec-Angoulême-Chalais. Within the Cognacais itself, production has become increasingly concentrated in the central "cru" of Grande and Petite Champagne (covering the cantons of Segonzac, Chateauneuf and parts of Cognac-Sud and Barbezieux) and, to a lesser extent in the Borderies "cru" (covering the canton of Cognac-Nord). The real victims of the cognac crisis have been producers in the outlying Fin Bois "cru" which covers the cantons of Jarnac, Rouillac, Hiersac and part of Baignes. Since these cantons include the cantons in which MODEF has achieved some impact, it seems reasonable to argue that the economic difficulties, and the greater differentiation, of farmers provides relatively fertile soil for MODEF. However, the fact that this group includes a MODEF stronghold such as Rouillac and a canton such as Hiersac where MODEF influence has been much less extensive suggests that there is no automatic connection between such

GRAPH 3.1: SHARE OF FINAL AGRICULTURAL  
OUTPUT BY PRODUCT: CHARENTE



SOURCE: MINISTÈRE DE L'AGRICULTURE, DIRECTION  
DEPT. DE LA CHARENTE, MÉMENTO AGRICOLE, 1973, 1978

difficulties and support for MODEF. Finally, it would also appear that economic success is a strongly inhibiting factor on MODEF.

B) THE CONFOLENTAIS The Confolentais is at the opposite end of the spectrum to the Cognacais as it is the most impoverished part of the department. It is really a border region of Limousin, hence the alternative name by which it is known, "la Charente limousine". The poor, hilly land is covered by forests and farms raising cattle, pigs and sheep. Just as Segonzac in the Cognacais is synonymous with success, the canton of Montemboeuf is a symbol of decline. By the end of the 1970s, the population of this canton had fallen to twenty-four per square kilometre, just four above the number considered to be the minimum level of viability. Of the 620 farmers of the canton in 1980, twenty per cent were over sixty-five years of age, no rationalization of the parcellization of land had taken place, no machinery co-operatives had been established and barely thirty farmers had joined agricultural development associations. A mere ten per cent of farmers had lined up their successors, a number so low that the UDSEA and the CDJA organized a campaign to persuade farmers from other parts of the department to consider setting up in Montemboeuf. (22) This is the extreme case but it nevertheless shows the contrast which exists in the department as well as providing a potential indicator for the future of the rest of the Confolentais.

This state of affairs is largely a reflection of the problems with which the meat industry has been confronted. Markets have been among the least organized and producers have been subject to intense foreign competition since the EEC has refused to adopt a policy of self-sufficiency in meat in order to facilitate the disposal of surpluses of other products on international markets. For example, the

shortage of pork in the early 1970s led to a major investment programme by French farmers but of which the results coincided with a dramatic increase in imports from as far afield as China. Similarly, British entry into the EEC with the associated exemptions for Commonwealth products brought about British competition on the European and domestic scene. This was, of course, directly the opposite of what government leaders and FNSEA officials had claimed in the early 1970s.

This competition emerged within the context of a more or less advanced degree of chaos in the organization of markets. The meat industry has been described as one in which "feudal structures" still prevail. (23) Though the desire to organize meat markets inspired the first great post-war farm revolt led by the Comité de Guerët, the extent to which improvements were made remained limited. Even as late as 1972, it was still the case that attempts to ameliorate the situation through the development of co-operation had generally failed because co-operatives did not have "le poids suffisant pour combattre l'influence des intermédiaires traditionnels que sont les grossistes-expéditeurs avec leurs manditaires, les commissaires qui "regnent sur les lieux". (24)

In the 1970s a more favorable evolution (from the farmer's point of view) took place. The co-operatives came to account for fifty per cent of pork sales, thirty per cent of beef sales but only ten per cent of the veal market. The fact that the co-operatives achieved their greatest market share in the pork industry suggests that private firms were only too happy to allow someone else to take the risks of the chaotic market. Furthermore, the ability of the co-operatives to protect farm interests was limited by the fact of their effective dependence on the large private firms who remained responsible for purchasing meat on the large urban markets such as La Villette.

At the same time, attempts to limit market anarchy also implied restriction of the freedom of the producer . In the 1960s and 1970s, tighter controls were established over the slaughtering of animals both in terms of hygiene and in terms of the numbers of licensed abbatoirs. Given the essential role of auto-consumption of produce in the Confolentais economy, this was an important consideration. In 1965, there were fifty-four public abbatoirs, three private ones and 300 butchers in the Poitou-Charentes region where animals could be slaughtered in large numbers for the market or in small numbers for household consumption. In an attempt to promote greater centralization and therefore, hopefully, a greater degree of organization, the government introduced a closures plan in 1966. Under the terms of the plan, slaughtering was to be concentrated in a few large abbatoirs such as Bressuire and Parthenay in the Deux-Sèvres with a limited number of medium-sized abattoirs in each department. For the farmers of the Confolentais, this meant that their options were limited to the slaughterhouses of Parthenay, Confolens, Ruffec and Montmorillon (Vienne). In practice the result has been a centralized rather than a local form of anarchy in which farmers have had to put up with the disadvantages of anarchy and centralization without the advantages which one or the other in isolation might have provided.(25)

The Confolentais has therefore provided MODEF with a higher level of support than the Cognacais. But the opportunity which the condition of Confolentais agriculture has afforded to MODEF has also been accompanied by obstacles created by that same condition. On the one hand, insecurity and unrewarding investment has created a receptive audience for MODEF. On the other hand, the disorganized state of the industry and the low level of collective organization (of whatever description) has limited the extent to which MODEF has been able to capitalize on the

opportunity. It is therefore no surprise that MODEF should have been more successful in the relatively dynamic canton of Chabanais than successful in atrophied and demoralized Montemboeuf.

C) THE ANGOUMOIS-RUFFECOIS This region is the one in which agricultural co-operation has been at its most advanced. By the late 1970s seventy percent of the cereals produced in the department was marketed by co-operatives, of which two, the Co-operative Agricole de la Charente (CAC) and the Co-operative Ceréalière de la Charente (CCC), accounted for fifty per cent.(26) As Graph 3:1 indicates, cereals production was the major growth area in the 1970s.

There has been a systematic increase in the acreage under cereals, particularly since 1970. Thanks to the influence of the AGPB within the FNSEA, cereals producers have benefitted most from EEC and national policy. Therefore cereals farmers have not suffered from the same degree of insecurity as other types of farmers. This can be seen by the fact that another 10,000 hectares in the Charente were given over to cereals during the 1970s.(27)

A closer analysis of the distribution of this extra acreage shows that problems remained. The specialist cereals farmers of the Angoumois-Ruffécois only accounted for twenty-four per cent of the increase. The substantial increases took place in polycultural cantons such as Aubeterre and Montmoreau in the south of the the department and on the periphery of the Cognacais (e.g. the southern part of Barbezieux). This suggests that the growth of the area under cereals reflects, not the satisfaction of the specialist cereals farmers with their protected position, but rather the increasing specialization by

polyculturalists in the least risky lines of business.

In fact the cereals farmers of the Angoumois-Ruffecois have experienced several problems not the least of which was the natural disaster of the mid-1970s drought. In the first place, prices of cereals have not kept pace with the prices of necessary industrial goods, especially fertilizers and fuel. Secondly, there is the problem of the increasing bureaucratization of the co-operatives, itself facilitated by increasing concentration as demonstrated by the pre-eminence of the CAC and the CCC. The financial demands of such co-operatives lent itself to certain practices such as the extension of the period between delivery of the crop and payment to the farmer, practices which undermined the identification between co-operatives and their members.(28) Finally, the strength of the AGPB, though providing benefits for cereals farmers, also permitted the AGPB to secure its own rewards for such services. Para-fiscal taxes on cereals designed to finance the development of the industry and compulsory AGPB duties levied by the co-operatives reduced the actual revenue of the farmer from the level to which he was theoretically entitled.

Nevertheless, it appears that the disadvantages have been outweighed by the benefits. The market protection secured by official unionism succeeded in creating a material basis for loyalty to the FNSEA. Similarly, objections to the EEC were undermined by the relative success of the CAP in providing a certain degree of security. This is clear from the decline of the MODEF vote in the region. In 1964 MODEF won the Ruffec Chamber of Agriculture seats and secured a majority in forty-three out of sixty-six communes. But since the stabilization of the EEC in 1966-67, the MODEF vote has consistently declined. In 1970, MODEF secured a majority in thirty-seven communes in the Ruffec

constituency but by 1976 it was only able to do so in twenty-one communes and lost the seats. Only in the canton of St. Amant de Boixe (in the Angoulême-Nord constituency) did MODEF continue to be in a strong position. But even here the MODEF vote fell from fifty-six per cent in 1964 to forty-nine per cent in 1976.

This suggests that support for MODEF arises from a material basis rather than from congenital oppositionism. Faced with a state of relative stability guaranteed by co-operatives, official unionism and the EEC, MODEF has been unable to maintain its early level of support. In short, if grievances are eliminated or accommodated then the ground is cut away from under MODEF's feet.

D) THE MONTMORELIEN This is a polycultural region in which cereals, beef and dairy farming are the main activities. As such it experienced the problems of the meat and cereals industries which have been described above. But more importantly, it has had to face the major changes in dairy farming which have occurred since 1960.

Until 1970, milk production and the number of cows increased steadily. This was partly in response to the greater and more profitable organization of the market brought about by the EEC. However, dairy farming was a victim of its own success. Responding to incentives, it produced itself out of a market and demonstrated the contradictions of the EEC's attempt to combine specific common policies with the absence of a genuine Common Agricultural Policy.

The 1970s saw the end of the boom as the milk subsidy was reduced and finally eradicated only to be replaced by the milk levy. As was seen in



Chapter 2, European milk policy has been ineffective in terms of reducing surpluses since it merely obliged farmers who have no alternative line of production to be more productive. In this respect the Montmorelien has been typical. Whilst the number of cows in the department declined by twenty-two per cent during the period 1970-1980, the decline in the Montmorelien was only twelve per cent. Given the fact that cereals production increased faster in the region than in the department as a whole, it seems likely that dairy farming is a trap in which are caught farmers who have no choice but to produce milk.(29)

This trap is partly a result of ecological conditions but it is also related to the structure of the industry. Dairy farming in the Charente has traditionally been a field in which co-operatives have marketed most of the output, reaching the ninety per cent level by the end of the 1970s. (30) However, these co-operatives have been transformed during the 1960s and 1970s from small local operations to regional and inter-regional concerns. In 1960, the average Charente dairy co-operative operated on an artisanal scale, surviving mainly because of the gap between the low price of the milk received and the high price of butter sold. It was estimated at the time that rationalization of the industry would require the elimination of a quarter of the co-operatives. (31)

This is exactly what happened, and happened with a vengeance. The co-operatives expanded their staff and recruited technically qualified personnel, in the process acquiring a much more bureaucratic character. They also invested in new equipment on such a scale that they soon became over-equipped. The result was a series of mergers and takeovers which left two dominant co-operatives, the Co-operative de Baignes and the Co-operative de Sers-St. Anne de Claix. Both these co-operatives

extended their operations into neighbouring departments such as the Dordogne and the Gironde in order to make their investments profitable. The case of the Baignes co-operative is particularly interesting. During the 1960s Baignes absorbed other co-operatives in Montendre, Clion, Chepniers and Montguyon in the Charente-Maritime, those of St. Savin and Marsac in the Gironde as well as those of Medillac, St. Georges, Puyreaux and Vars in the Charente itself. (32) In 1976 it fused with the Toulouse-based Union Laitière Pyrénéenne to form the Union Laitière Pyrénées Aquitaine Charentes (ULPAC), thus becoming the largest dairy co-operative in the south west. Not content with this, in 1981 ULPAC entered into negotiations on amalgamation with its nearest rival, Tempé-Lait of Montauban. (33)

However much the process of concentration has limited the damage to the industry, from the point of view of the individual farmer co-operatives have taken on an existence of their own. Competition between co-operatives for the farmer's produce has given way to the rationalization of production and collection by the co-operatives. Instead of picking up each day's output from the farm, co-operatives have obliged farmers to store milk until the less and less frequent visits of the collector. This involves investment in the form of refrigeration tanks and associated equipment. Such investment often effectively traps the farmer in the industry. Similarly, the change of emphasis on the part of the co-operatives from serving the farmer towards supplying urban demands has involved the co-operatives in demanding more and more control over the quality and supply of milk. One way in which this has been done is through the signing of long-term contracts lasting for ten years with an option for a further five. (34) This obviously limits the degree to which the farmer can respond to changes in price. In effect the co-operatives have come to occupy such

a strong position with respect to their members and suppliers that they are able to subordinate the needs of the farmer to their own requirements.

Les impératifs de la modernisation semblaient aller parfois à l'encontre de leurs (farmers) intérêts immédiats, et les ristournes se faisaient plus modestes et plus rares, sans parler des nouvelles exigences imposés par la recherche de "la qualité"... récompensé par des primes, sanctionné par des pénalisations. (35)

A clear demonstration of this tendency occurred in 1981. Hardly had farmers the time to savour their relative victory of the EEC price rises agreed to assist the Giscardian re-election campaign when the co-operatives announced that the 12.67 per cent rise agreed in Brussels would not be passed on to farmers until and unless the co-operatives managed to raise their own prices first.. (36)

Given the difficulties of dairy farming, it might have been expected that MODEF would have been more successful in the Montmorelien than it has been. As will become apparent later, there are very good political reasons for this. For the moment, the economic factors alone will be considered. These are threefold.

The first inhibition is the notorious difficulty of organizing dairy farmers because of the nature of the production process. For dairy farmers the working year consists of 365 days since animals have to be attended to every day. As a result they have much less freedom to organize their working, social and activist lives than have other farmers, especially wine growers. Secondly, the rise of MODEF in the

1960s also coincided with the expansion of the industry thanks to higher EEC prices. MODEF's anti-EEC propaganda therefore fell on deaf ears. In the 1970s, though the crisis was severe, it was very different from those affecting the Confolentais and the periphery of the Cognacais. Unlike the problems in the meat industry, the milk crisis was organized and gradual. Dairy farmers have not been subjected to the wild fluctuations which occurred on meat markets. Finally, the management of the crisis has been in the hands of a highly developed co-operative sector. In the Montmorelien the crisis has been handled by the leaders of the farming community through their positions on the Boards of Directors of the co-operatives. By contrast, the cognac crisis has been "inflicted" on the farmers by "outsiders" from private firms.

Having examined all four regions of the Charente, it is time to attempt to draw some general conclusions about the connection between the economic environment and the level of MODEF support. The above analysis suggests that the key variables in this link are the degree of security which is afforded to each type of agriculture and the nature of control over the process by which agricultural produce is transformed into consumer goods. Before going any further, it must be recognized that there are certain dangers in this kind of comparative analysis. The major problem is that one runs the risk of refining the analysis into meaninglessness by introducing too many qualifications. But not to do so means running the risk of irrelevance by presenting a set of examples which are not placed in a coherent framework. In the belief that the risks of the latter policy outweigh those of the former, the comparative analysis will proceed. Having stressed the impossibility of finding easy answers in previous chapters, logic requires that the consequences of such an argument are followed through.

Security includes two dimensions. On the one hand, there is the question of the level of revenue generated by the farm whilst, on the other hand, there is the problem of the predictability of such revenue. For instance, the cognac producers of the outlying parts of the Cognacais are generally considered to obtain higher revenues than the cereals farmers of the Angoumois but the organization of the cereals market is such that the revenue of the latter is more secure.

The second variable relates to the way in which the market is organized in order to transform agricultural produce into commodities. The distinction made here is between the industries in which this role is performed by private enterprise and those in which the representatives of farmers in the co-operative sector carry out this function.

The various areas of the department can now be classified in terms of these variables. The Confolentais is effectively subordinated to private industry and suffers from insecurity both in terms of the level and the predictability of income. The Montmorelien, by contrast, is dominated by the co-operative sector. A low degree of security in terms of income levels exists but the region occupies an intermediary position in terms of the predictability of income. The Angoumois-Ruffécois is also a co-operative zone, relatively secure as far as income levels as concerned but benefitting above all from a high degree of predictability. Finally, there is a need to distinguish between the two parts of the Cognacais. The central cantons enjoy high levels of security in both senses whilst the peripheral cantons are less favoured in both respects. This distinction between the centre and the periphery is purely a geographical one and is not an attempt to smuggle in another variable.

Confronting this typology with the pattern of MODEF support, certain conclusions can be drawn. In terms of the concept of security, it appears that a high level of security in both respects is not conducive to the growth of support for MODEF, as its relative failure in the central Cognacais shows. At the other end of the scale, it appears that very low levels of security in both its dimensions limit the prospect of MODEF support. Levels of support for MODEF are much higher in cantons, such as Rouillac, where insecurity takes the form of low predictability rather than low levels of income. This would appear to be yet another confirmation of Eric Wolf's theory of the middle peasant as the political activist.

As far as the ownership and control of the means of transformation are concerned, the evidence suggests that farmers are quite prepared to accept the dominance of private enterprise as long as it pays them to do so. The difference in MODEF support in the central and peripheral Cognacais is a case in point. Cantons favoured by the purchasing policy of the merchants have been much more docile and more hostile to MODEF than those which have become the real victims of the cognac crisis. By contrast, co-operatives enjoy more leeway than private enterprise. Their members appear to be more tolerant of their failure to protect the security of the farm than are the suppliers of private enterprise. The position of the farmers of the Montmorelien supports this conclusion. This suggests that the ability of those organizing a particular industry to guarantee security to their suppliers brings its own rewards in terms of maintaining loyalty to the FNSEA. MODEF is weaker where the combination of the EEC, national government, the FNSEA and agro-industry is able to provide clear benefits to farmers. (37) Unfortunately for

MODEF the reverse is not true. The inability to supply such benefits does not automatically work in MODEF's favour. Insecurity, therefore, provides an opportunity but does not ensure MODEF success. There are sociological and political factors which also have an effect on the outcome. It is to these that we now turn.

#### 5. CLASS DIFFERENTIATION IN THE CHARENTE

In the two preceding chapters, inequality within agriculture was identified as one of the factors which helps to explain the existence of MODEF and the degree of support which it has been able to attract. The purpose of looking at the sociological aspects of agriculture is not to find alternative explanations for cases which cannot be explained by economic factors. It is simply a recognition of the need for multi-dimensional explanations.

A casual drive around the Charente provides a graphic illustration of the contrasts to be found within the department. Simply by looking at the types of farmhouse and buildings, one gains a rapid and valuable insight into the extent of inequality. For instance, moving from the small functional farmhouses of the Confolentais, one discovers the solid affluence of the Angoumois and the walled-in chateau-like farmhouses of the Cognacais.

Nevertheless, for inequality to have any political significance, there must be an awareness of inequality. But the extent and nature of this awareness depends on what is being compared. Therefore, the subjective awareness of inequality does not reflect any objective league table of inequality which the external observer may construct. Farmers do not

compare themselves to abstract departmental or national averages but to other groups of farmers with whom it is felt legitimate to compare oneself. These comparisons are of two types, infra-regional and inter-regional.

This would explain the success of MODEF in the peripheral Cognacais. Though in an above average position by any objective criteria, the farmers of the peripheral Cognacais compare themselves to those of the central Cognacais. Witnessing the increasing concentration of production in the Segonzac and Chateauneuf areas, they are only too well aware of the conflict of interests between the two groups. In the case of the Confolentais, there is a strong connection between subjective appreciation and the objective hierarchy of inequality. Since the farmer of the Confolentais sees his position as unfavorable compared to that of farmers in the rest of the department, the perception of inequality is helpful to MODEF.

In the other regions it would appear that the comparisons made are infra-regional. In the Angoumois -Ruffécois, the obvious distinction is between the large cereals farms and the small and medium-sized sector. Thanks to the flat rate subsidies provided by the EEC, the CAP has helped the larger farm, with its lower unit costs, more than the small and medium firm it was allegedly designed to help. Though this division provides a certain base for MODEF, the fact that such farmers see the consequences of the absence of such protection just beside them in the Confolentais limits the extent to which this inequality has political repercussions. The common interest of all categories in maintaining the relatively privileged situation which cereals farmers have enjoyed under the CAP outweighs conflict over the distribution of the spoils.



In the Montmorelien, the internal comparison also seems to have taken precedence. As Table 3:5 shows, the Montmorelien is the region in which concentration has advanced most rapidly. Paradoxically, the high level of concentration has had an egalitarian effect. By increasing the numbers of farmers in the medium category, the gap between the extremities has been narrowed. The expectation of becoming a medium-scale farmer has counteracted the fear of losing one's farm altogether.

In order to conclude this analysis, there is another aspect of inequality which must be introduced. One must assess the extent to which perceived inequalities are compatible with the continued existence of the farms at the wrong end of the scale. Clearly, such inequality as exists in the Montmorelien and the Angoumois-Ruffécois does not involve an immediate threat to the small and medium-scale farm. The same is also true of the Confolentais. But in the Cognacais, the conflict for markets between the central and peripheral areas poses a direct threat to the survival of the periphery, as the pressure to liberalize the market in the interests of the centre demonstrates.

The political significance of inequality and the prospects for MODEF depend therefore on the two dimensions of inequality. MODEF is most successful where inequality occurs within a zero sum context. The gains of the central Cognacais have been made at the expense of the periphery. The advantage for MODEF is that such forms of inequality lead to conflict within the farming community and thus confirm MODEF assumptions about the class divisions within agriculture.

## 6. THE POLITICS OF THE CHARENTE

It is now time to deal with the final piece of the jigsaw, the political context in which MODEF has operated in the Charente. As we have seen, economic failure does not automatically incur political costs. This is due to the fact that one of the primary functions of political elites is, at the risk of being taken for a Poujadist, the management of failure and the containment of its potential consequences.

In order to account for the pattern of MODEF support in the department, one has to examine the different ways in which this control has been maintained in each area of the department. One of the leading figures in the post-war politics of the Charente has described the department in the following terms: "Par bien de ses aspects, la Charente est exemplaire en ce que, tout en demeurant originale, elle a toujours eu le bon goût de ne pas vouloir se faire remarquer".(38) Senator Marciharcy's view of the Charente as a tranquil republican department derives as much from myth as reality. This myth has been perpetuated by both academic and literary writers. Jacques Chardonne and Francois Mitterrand, to name but two of the Charente's most famous writers, have both made contributions to the legend whilst a 1934 study of electoral geography describes the citizens of the Charente as "prudent, respectueux de l'administration, peu révolutionnaire et ennemi des aventures". (39)

The problem is that this ignores the Charente's equally remarkable capacity to provide a home for every political bandwagon since Louis Napoleon. The tradition of moderation and accommodation with central government and the powers-that-be has been persistently challenged by movements of resistance to those powers. In reality, both the victors

and the losers of national political conflicts have been represented in the department. In 1899, Deroulède was elected to the National Assembly for the constituency of Angoulême. The region of Confolens demonstrated an early predilection for the PCF as the party managed to increase its vote in the disastrous class against class election of 1932. (40) Furthermore, the CGPT presence in the 1930s was followed by a substantial Poujadist influence in the 1950s. (41)

This should not be regarded as an explanation for MODEF's strength in the department since historical explanations were ruled out in Chapter 1. It is merely to point out that, beneath the mask of tranquility, the politics of resistance have played a part, and perhaps a more interesting part, in the life of the department. It also reveals that such politics were not invented by MODEF. Nevertheless, it remains to be seen how MODEF was able to renew and continue the tradition of resistance.

The Charente provides a classic example of the importance of the different strategies used to maintain control over the mass of farmers. In each of the three Parliamentary constituencies, Angoulême, Cognac and Confolens-Ruffec, a different model of elite leadership and domination has been applied.

A) ANGOULÊME The Angoulême constituency was held by one man for forty-six years. Raymond Rethoré was elected as a radical socialist in 1936 and won every election in the constituency until his defeat in 1978 at the hands of the socialist mayor of Angoulême, Jean-Michel Boucheron. Rethoré's politics remained unchanged after 1940 when he supported de Gaulle. From then on, he was to remain an individualist Gaullist. As mayor of the rural commune of Magnac Lavalette, his influence was

concentrated in the rural areas of the constituency. His style of political operation has been described in Michel Bélanger's study of the Charente.

Il a acquis une influence considérable auprès des masses rurales... recevant très simplement en son château, écrivant chaque année des milliers de lettres d'intervention, il a su s'attacher ces populations paysannes qui ont retrouvés en lui, dans un certain sens, le notable du dix-neuvième siècle, c'est-à-dire le hobereau local. (42)

This, of course, represents a classic case of partial integration. Dealings between the state and the farmer are mediated by local notables. In Rethoré's social work-style of politics, there was limited scope for the emergence of lay elites since there was no pressing necessity for them to do so. It is therefore hardly surprising that MODEF should be at its weakest in this constituency. None of the six cantons identified as MODEF strongholds are to be found here. Furthermore, within the constituency only eleven communes consistently voted for MODEF over the 1964-1979 period. Of these eleven, three were situated in the semi-urban cantons of Ruelle and Soyaux (previously part of the Angoulême cantons) where Rethoré's influence was at its weakest. Three other communes were at the geographical extremities of the constituency. In the immediate vicinity of Rethoré's base, Magnac Lavalette, only the commune of Gardes-le-Pontaroux supported MODEF. This suggests a case of local rivalry. In the other cases, the explanation would appear to be the emergence of capable local leaders confident enough to challenge the Rethoré monopoly. Grassac, in the canton of Montbron is a vivid example since it has been the local base of Raymond Mineau himself.

MAP 3:7 MODEF STRONGHOLDS AND PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES: CHARENTE



Source C H B H

SOURCE: CHAMBRE D'AGRICULTURE DE LA CHARENTE

B) COGNAC The structure of political control has been very different in this constituency. The cognac dynasties have been traditionally very reluctant to engage openly in political activity. Those of their members who have done so, such as Edouard Hennessey in the 1920s or Francois Hardy in the 1970s have had to overcome the hostility of their families and colleagues.

The dominant figure in the post-war politics of Cognac was Félix Gaillard, deputy from the Liberation to his accidental death in 1970. Though he had family connections in the Barbezieux area, he was a Parisian by birth and education and was therefore an outsider for both the farmers and merchants of the Cognacais. In contrast to his colleague in the Angoulême seat, his career depended on his role in national rather than local politics. As a leading member of the Resistance, of the Inspection des Finances and of various Fourth Republican Governments until the formation of his own ministry in 1957, the Rethoré style of politics was not a practical proposition. Neither did he have the local status to permit himself the all-embracing role which Rethoré played. He was therefore obliged to deal with his constituents through local leaders and activists. Bélanger describes him as a "rassembleur des élites". (43)

As one would expect on the basis of the hypotheses put forward in the preceding chapters, such political arrangements allowed a great deal more scope to MODEF. MODEF was able to fit itself into the vacuum between Gaillard and his agricultural constituents. Out of the six pro-MODEF cantons identified above, three are in this constituency, Brossac, Baignes and Rouillac. The former two are in the southern half of the constituency where Gaillard was at his strongest, being both a municipal councillor for Barbezieux and conseiller general for Baignes.

C) CONFOLENS-RUFFEC Unlike the other constituencies, Confolens-Ruffec has lacked a dominant political figure. But a dominant leader has been present on both the Left and the Right. The outcome of most of the Parliamentary elections over the 1962-78 period has been determined by a narrow majority. In the 1950s and the early 1960s, the standard bearer of the Right was the independent extreme right-winger, Jean Valentin, but whose position was gradually captured by the Gaullist mayor of Ruffec, Michel Alloncle. Whilst the Right led in the Angoumois-Ruffecoais area of the constituency, the Confolentais provided the geographical base of the Left. Throughout the period under consideration, the dominant figure on the Left was the PCF representative, Andre Soury, mayor of Pressignac and conseiller general for Chabanais.

The consequences of this geo-political division for MODEF have been fourfold. As Map 3:7 shows, the thirty-one pro-MODEF communes can be divided into two categories; those in the three clusters of Chabanais, St. Amant-de-Boixe and La Rochefoucauld and those scattered about the rest of the constituency. Every canton, except Champagne-Mouton, includes at least one of these pro-MODEF communes. This suggests that the intense rivalry between the competing political elites has permitted more space for self-organization by farmers and, therefore, more favourable terrain for MODEF. Second, the existence of overlapping zones of political influence, such as cantons like St. Amant-de-Boixe and La Rochefoucauld on the periphery of the Gaullist and Communist zones, has also encouraged farmers to take matters into their own hands. Third, the absence of a political leader in such a solid position as Rethoré and the consequent absence of the absolutely reliable provision of services has increased the necessity for farmers to deal with their

own problems. In this respect, it is interesting to note the coincidence of the decline in MODEF support in the Ruffec area and Alloncle's gradual consolidation of his position. Finally, the fact that the Left was represented by a supporter of MODEF (and indeed a former member) provided MODEF with political sympathy and demonstrated how far farmers could participate in the political system without non-farmer intermediaries.

On the basis of this evidence, one can conclude that the form of political organization and the way in which political leadership is exercised in a given area is a more valuable indicator of MODEF prospects than party political predelictions. In other words, there is no simple connection between the level of support enjoyed by the PCF and that obtained by MODEF. The following section is therefore devoted to an analysis of the connection between PCF and MODEF electoral successes in the department.



# 7. PCF AND MODEF IN THE CHARENTE

TABLE 3:6 PCF VOTE IN PRO-MODEF COMMUNES: CHARENTE 1962-1979

<u>CONSTITUENCY</u>	<u>ABOVE AVERAGE PCF VOTE</u>					<u>PCF BEST-PLACED LEFT PARTY</u>				
	1962	1967	1968	1973	1978	1962	1967	1968	1973	1978
ANGOULEME (11 communes)	8	5	8	6	7	10	5	6	4	3
COGNAC (31 communes)	15	23	24	21	22	0	4	3	21	12
CONFOLENS (31 communes)	18	20	21	16	17	31	30	30	27	21
-----										
CHARENTE (73 communes)	41	48	53	43	46	41	39	40	52	36
-----										

This Table illustrates the performance of the PCF on the first ballot of each Parliamentary election between 1962 and 1978 in the communes with permanent MODEF majorities. These elections have been selected for consideration since they provide the best indicator of party identification. Before going any further in the examination of the implications of Table 3:6, there is a serious methodological question to consider. There is, of course, a major problem in comparing professional and political election results. How does one isolate the

farming vote from the rest of the electorate? In other words, what does the fact that the PCF secures an above average vote in Parliamentary elections tell us about the voting behaviour of the farmers in the commune.

The most serious attempt to deal with this problem is the analysis conducted by Derivy. (44) Derivy begins by criticizing the approach of a pioneer in this field, Klatzmann. In the 1950s, Klatzmann attempted to isolate the farming vote by considering the results of elections in cantons where the vast majority of the population were farmers and concluded that there was a significant difference between the farming vote and the behaviour of the electorate as a whole. Derivy points out that the flaw in this procedure is that the exceptional cantons which Klatzmann studied could not be regarded as a cross-section of rural society. Therefore, one could not generalize from these results. Using a much wider range of rural cantons and more advanced statistical techniques, Derivy concludes that farmers tend to vote along the same lines as the rest of the rural population. This means that farmers in right-wing areas vote mainly for the parties of the Right whilst those in left-wing regions vote for the parties of the Left. Unfortunately, Derivy's case has one major weakness, the absence of an explanation of why this should be so.

An explanation for this state of affairs will become apparent in succeeding chapters. It will be seen that farmers play a major role in local electoral politics and many are local councillors. Many of those interviewed in the course of this research reported that farmer candidates of all parties were frequently poll-toppers and that many were elected even when their lists lost. This would suggest that the

coincidence between the farmer and the general vote is not due to farmers following non-farmers but is a result of the influence which farmers exercise as local political leaders. It is on the basis of this coincidence that the following analysis will proceed.

Table 3:6 makes it clear that the image of MODEF as an electoral satellite of the PCF is somewhat misleading. If such arguments were correct, one would expect these seventy-three communes to be much more favorable to the PCF than they have been; both in terms of the percentage of the votes secured by the party and in terms of the party's strength relative to the rest of the Left. Using the contingency co-efficient technique (C), one finds a large gap between expected and actual results. (45) With respect to the average vote of the PCF,  $C = 0.80$  for the Angoulême constituency,  $0.89$  in the Cognac constituency,  $0.98$  in the Confolens constituency and  $0.95$  in the department as a whole. As far as the PCF being the best placed party is concerned,  $C = 0.87$  for Angoulême,  $0.97$  for Cognac,  $0.66$  for Confolens and  $0.97$  for the department as a whole.

The contingency co-efficient shows that MODEF cannot be reduced to the PCF. Even in the case of the relatively low figure of  $0.66$  for the PCF as the best-placed party in Confolens, one must remember that the number of communes in this category was increased by the fact that the PCF enjoyed a virtual monopoly on the Left in the constituency during the 1960s. This is plainly demonstrated by the rise of the reconstructed PS in the constituency and the consequent fall in the number of pro-MODEF communes in which the PCF remained the best-placed party of the Left.

At the same time, the absolute figures show that the PCF has attained a certain degree of success in the pro-MODEF communes which it would be equally misleading to ignore. This degree of influence suggests that PCF supporters provide a hard core of support for MODEF. But it is equally clear that the success of MODEF in becoming the largest force in oppositional unionism has been due to its ability to win support beyond the political boundaries of the PCF from the supporters of the other parties of the Left. This is particularly apparent in Cognac where the electoral successes of the PCF in the pro-MODEF communes were overshadowed by the electoral popularity of Félix Gaillard. In order for MODEF to have secured the level of support which it obtained in the 1960s it had to have won support from a certain section of the Gaillard electorate and, judging from the MRG presence in MODEF during the 1970s, it is reasonable to assume that such support came from those who would provide the electoral base of the MRG after the split in the Radical Party.

A high PCF profile is therefore indispensable to MODEF but is not enough. One consequence of the weakness of the party in the Angoulême constituency has been a relatively weak MODEF. On the other hand, Confolens provides an even more striking example of the second part of the equation. Despite being the most communist area of the department, MODEF has failed to win the Chamber of Agriculture seats for Confolens. It is where a strong PCF presence has coexisted with strong representation of other parties of the Left that MODEF has achieved its greatest successes. It is as if MODEF required a PCF rocket to get off the launching pad but also needed a non-communist Left second stage in order to enter into orbit. However large the PCF part is, as in the Confolentais, the second stage is still vital. That MODEF is acutely

aware of this interdependence is testified to by the almost pathological concern for internal unity between the different political tendencies within MODEF with which the organization is preoccupied. (46)

## 8. THE VAUCLUSE

As has been seen above, the Vaucluse differs in many respects from the Charente. The purpose of this section is to investigate whether these differences are such that the factors isolated in the analysis of the Charente are still applicable to the Vaucluse.

Just as the Charente contains diverse types of farming, within the 3,556 square km of the Vaucluse one finds an even more extreme diversity. Apart from the three major agricultural regions, the Comtat, the Tricastin and the Monts de Ventoux, Vaucluse and Luberon, there are three other regions on the fringes of the department. The borders of these regions are traversed by the boundaries of the four Chamber of Agriculture constituencies and the three Parliamentary constituencies.

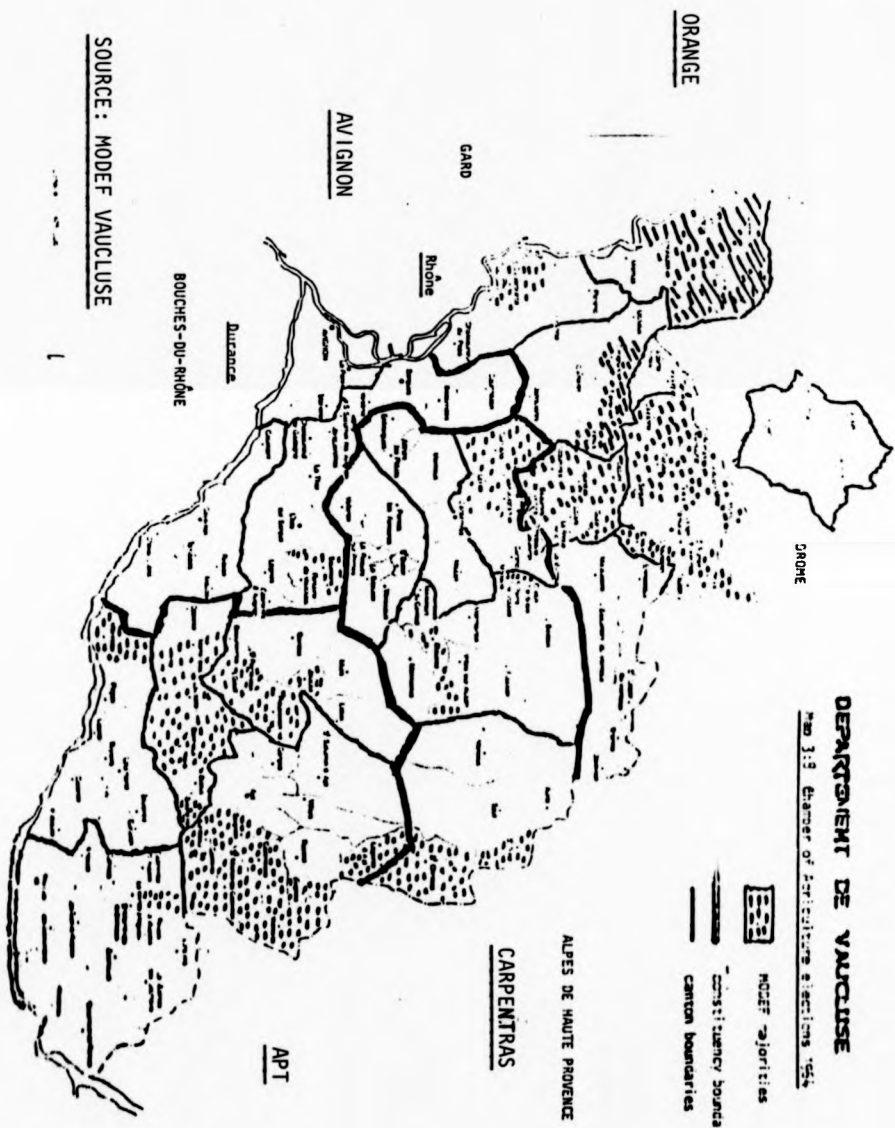
This diversity is reflected in the pattern of support for MODEF, analysis of which is greatly assisted by the pioneering article of Grosso. (47) The great value of this article for present purposes is that it poses the same question which is being addressed here - why do some farmers support MODEF instead of the FNSEA or instead of remaining indifferent?

Map 3:8 shows the communes in which MODEF secured a majority in the 1964 Chamber of Agriculture elections. MODEF won forty-nine per cent of the

DEPARTEMENT DE VAUCLUSE

Map 3-13 Chamber of Agriculture elections 1954

- NOTES: majorities
- constituency boundaries
- canton boundaries



ORANGE

GARD

AVIGNON

RHOÑE

BOUCHES-DU-RHÑNE

ALPES DE HAUTE PROVENCE

CARPENTRAS

APT

SOURCE: MODEP VAUCLUSE

# DEPARTEMENT DE VAUCLUSE

Map 3-9 Chamber of Agriculture elections 1967-1970



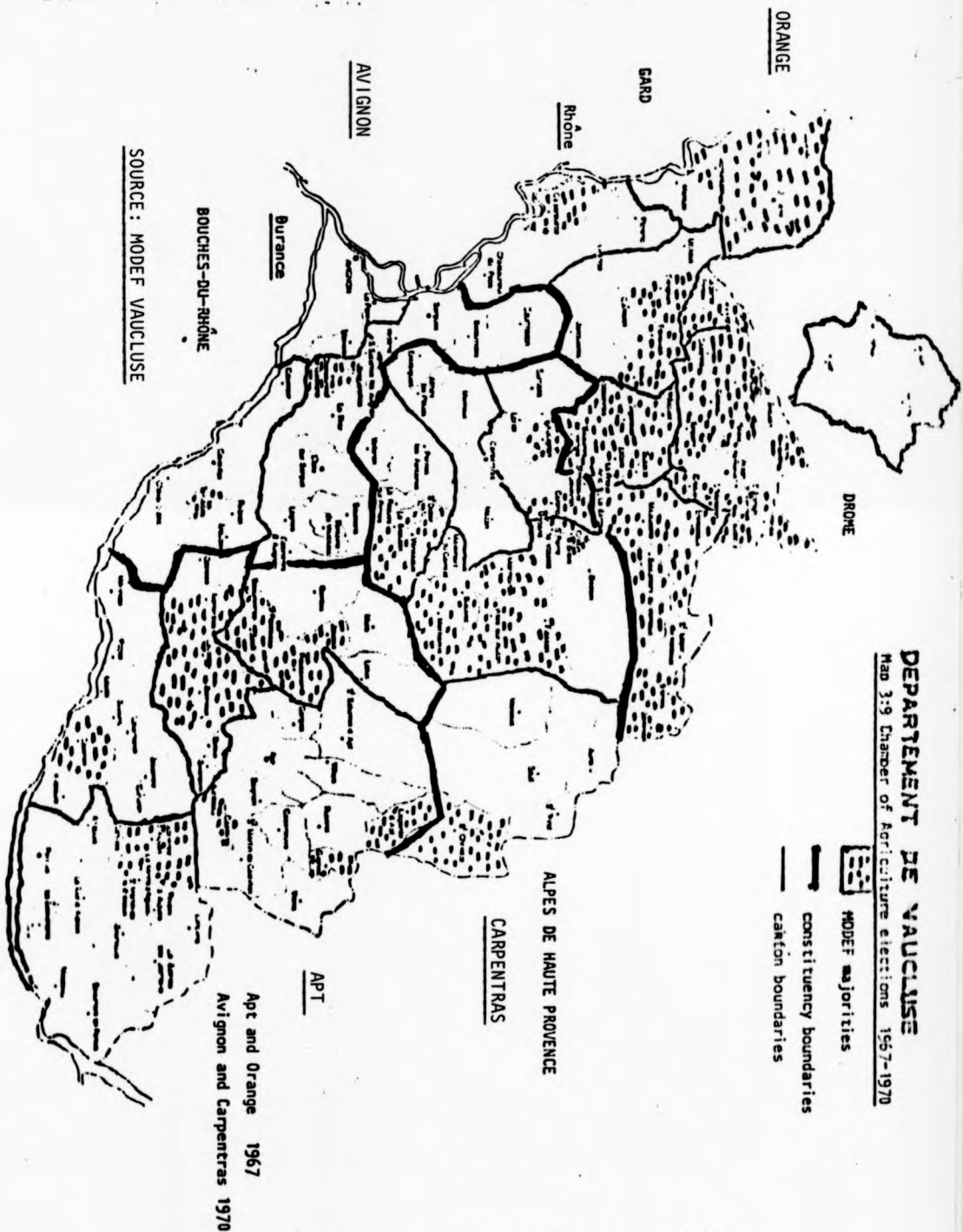
MODEP majorities



constituency boundaries



cañon boundaries



SOURCE: MODEP VAUCLUSE

BOUCHES-DU-RHÔNE

Burange

AVIGNON

GARD

Rhône

ORANGE

DRÔME

ALPES DE HAUTE PROVENCE

CARPENTRAS

APT

Apt and Orange 1967

Avignon and Carpentras 1970

# DÉPARTEMENT DE VAUCLUSE

Map 3:10 Chamber of Agriculture elections 1974-1976



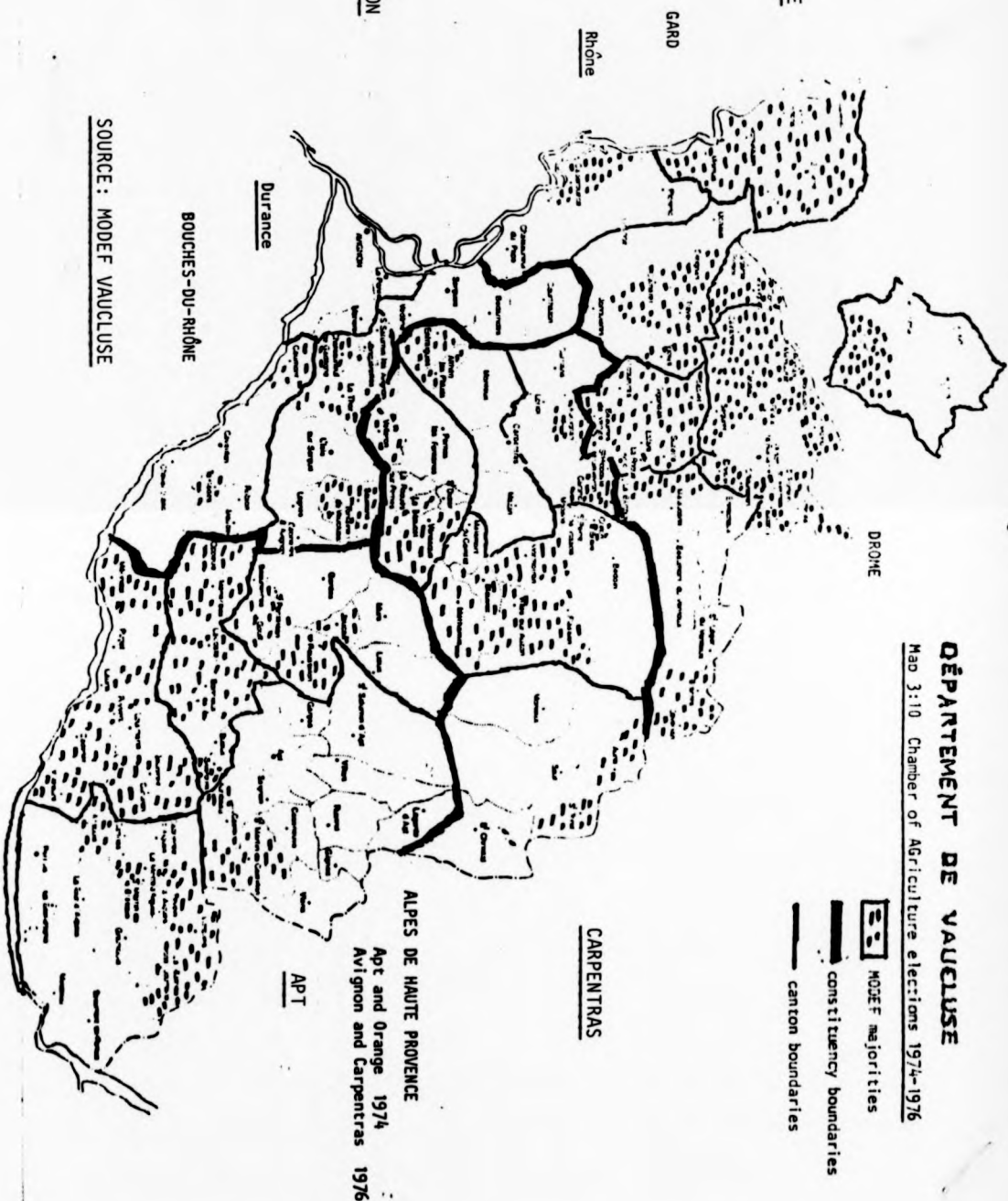
MODEF majorities



constituency boundaries



canton boundaries



SOURCE: MODEF VAUCLUSE



vote in the Orange constituency, thirty-six per cent in Apt, thirty-seven per cent in Carpentras and twenty-seven per cent in Avignon. This gave MODEF an average of thirty-seven per cent for the whole department and permitted it to win two seats in Orange. The MODEF majorities were concentrated in two blocs; one in the north of the department around the cantons of Beaumes-de-Venise, Bollène and Vaison with extensions into Orange-Est and Carpentras-Nord; the other in the south around Bonnieux, Gordes and Apt.

Map 3:9 reveals the major victory obtained in Orange in 1967. With fifty-six per cent of the vote, MODEF took all four seats. Not only did the original bloc hold together but MODEF also extended its influence into the previously recalcitrant canton of Malaucène. Only Orange-Ouest and Valréas held out for the FNSEA. In the Apt constituency, the picture was somewhat different as MODEF held on to its position in Bonnieux and Gordes but suffered a setback in the canton of Apt. Its share of the vote fell slightly to thirty-five per cent.

In 1970, MODEF discovered that Avignon's tradition of providing a sanctuary for schism did not extend to farm unionism. Its vote increased only marginally to thirty per cent and it could only muster a majority in two out of the twenty-two communes in the constituency. In Carpentras, however, MODEF made further advances, particularly in the cantons of Mormoiron and Pernes, which raised its share of the vote to forty-three per cent.

The elections of 1974-76 represented MODEF's high point in the department, just as it did at the national level. As Map 3:10 suggests, the Orange seats were held with relative ease as MODEF obtained fifty-three per cent of the vote. The pattern established in previous


elections was confirmed except for a notable decline in support in Malaucène. In Apt, the Bonnieux-Gordes axis remained intact whilst at the same time the dramatic inroads into Cadenet, and to a lesser extent, Pertuis ensured MODEF's first electoral victory in this constituency.

By 1976, MODEF believed themselves to be challenging the FDSEA for control of the Chamber. However, MODEF's rapid progression in the Carpentras constituency continued but fell just short of the target, reaching forty-eight per cent of the vote. In Avignon matters were complicated by the addition of a third slate of right-wing dissidents. The communes marked in the Avignon constituency are those in which MODEF secured a majority and those in which it was by far the most successful list, narrowly failing to score fifty per cent. MODEF just managed to hold on to its 1970 level of support but still only won a majority in three communes.

Map 3:11 synthesizes this series of results. The communes indicated are those in which MODEF secured a majority on at least two out of three occasions between 1964-76. This is a less restrictive definition of the MODEF stronghold than that employed for the Charente. There are two reasons for this. On the one hand, unlike the Charente Federation, the Vaucluse Federation was a newly-created organization. As the process of construction of the Federation continued until the late 1960s, it would be misleading to use the same definition. Furthermore, if one took such a rigid stance there would be too few cases of MODEF strongholds on which to base a serious analysis.

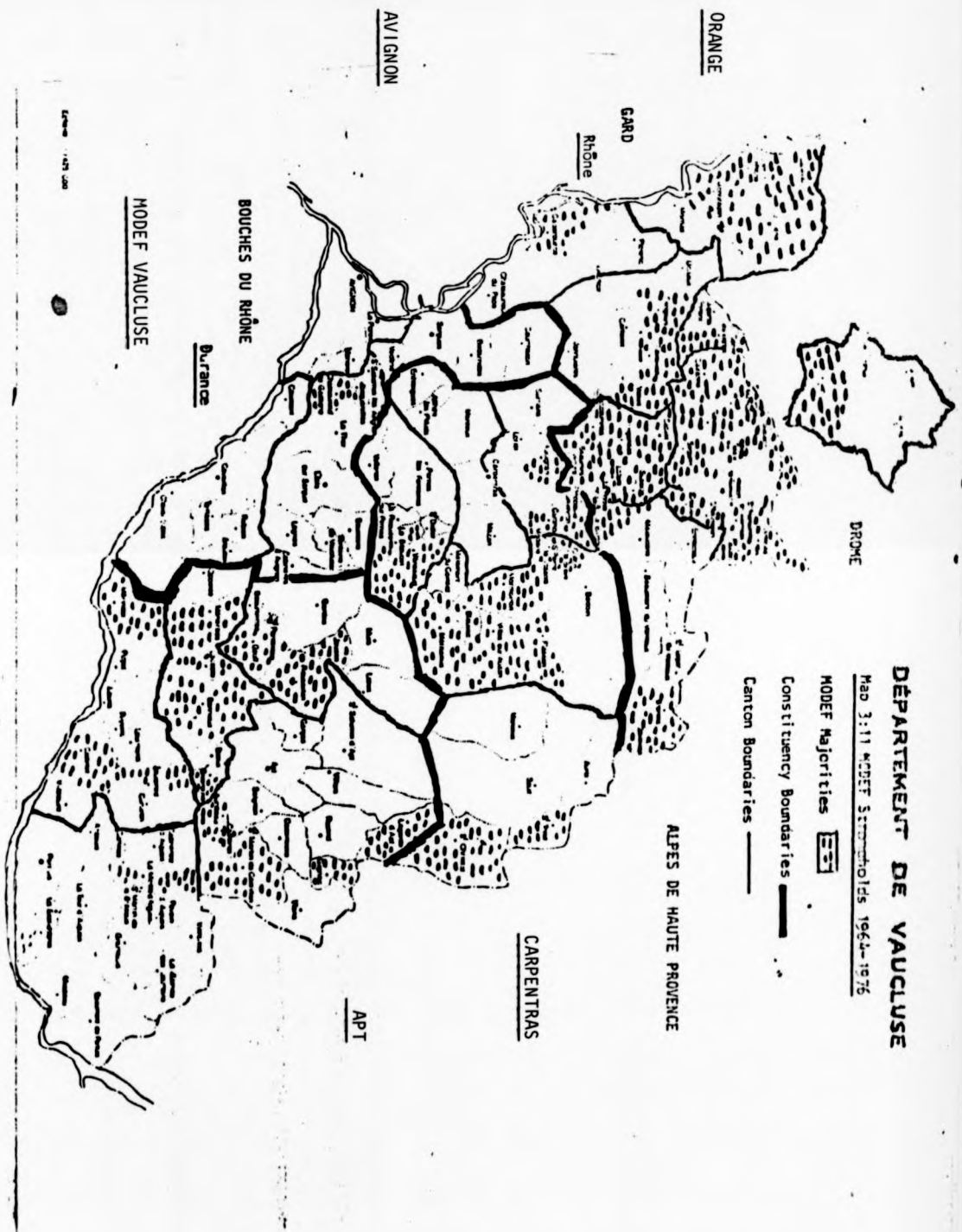
DÉPARTEMENT DE VAUCLUSE

Map 3:11 MODEP Secondoids 1964-1976

MODEP Majorities 

Constituency Boundaries 

Canton Boundaries 



As Map 3:11 shows, the strongholds of MODEF are the cantons of Bollène, Beaumes-de-Venise, Bonnieux, Vaison and Mormoiron. On the fringes of these cantons are to be found small groups of neighbouring communes, such as those in Gordes, Orange-Est, Carpentras-Nord and Pernes. MODEF's weakest points are, by contrast, those in proximity to the three main towns of the department, Avignon, Carpentras and Orange.

#### 4. AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY AND AGRICULTURAL REGIONS IN THE VAUCLUSE

Map 3:12 shows the borders of the six agricultural regions. The Comtat Venaissin, Tricastin and Monts de Ventoux, Vaucluse and Luberon are the major regions in which the vast majority of the farmers of the department are to be found. The other three regions are extensions of regions which lie mainly in other departments such as the Drôme (Baronnies), Alpes de Haute Provence, (Plateau de St Christol) and Bouches-du-Rhône (Basse Vallée de la Durance.) This map also indicates that agricultural region is an important variable as the concentration of MODEF support in the Tricastin and the Monts suggests.

A) THE COMTAT VENAISSIN: In the commercial centre of the Comtat, Chateaurenard, there is a fountain in the town centre with the following inscription: "Eici l'aigo es d'or". It is because the Comtat is so well off in this respect that it is one of the richest regions in France. The Comtat is the 'garden of France', a status which it owes to its history as a mediaeval clerical state. For agriculture, the great benefit of papal authority was the construction of a system of

irrigation. Canals were constructed as early as the tenth century whilst the Durance had been harnessed for irrigation purposes by the fourteenth century. (48)

With the exception of the part of the canton of Orange-Ouest which lies in the Comtat, and the commune of Chateauneuf-du-Pape in particular, the farmers of the Comtat are mainly producers of fruit and vegetables. Through most of the 1960s and 1970s, the Comtat was able to maintain its privileged position thanks to the frequency, quality, variety and the precociousness of their crops. Because of the irrigation system, more than one crop a year can be raised, thus increasing the productivity of the land whilst the variety of output usually permitted bad results on one market to be compensated by success on another. The reputation for quality and the early entry of its crops onto seasonal markets allowed them to compete fairly effectively with the produce of other regions and countries.

Though these factors allowed the Comtat to retain its leading position in French agriculture, dealing with foreign competition became increasingly difficult so that by the 1980s, the Durance served not only as a source of water but as the ultimate destination for produce which failed to find a buyer. (49) As Langevin points out, the Comtat has only survived so long by the openness to innovation demonstrated by its farmers (i.e. as in the use of greenhouses) and their heavy investment. For example, whilst the average French farm used ninety-five kgs of fertilizer per hectare, in Provence Côte d'Azur, this figure rose to 150 kgs. In consequence, along with other rises in costs, the share of the costs of production in final output value rose from twenty-two per cent in 1970 to thirty-seven per cent in 1976. (50)

# DÉPARTEMENT DE VAUCLUSE

Map 3-12. MODEP Strongholds and Agricultural Regions

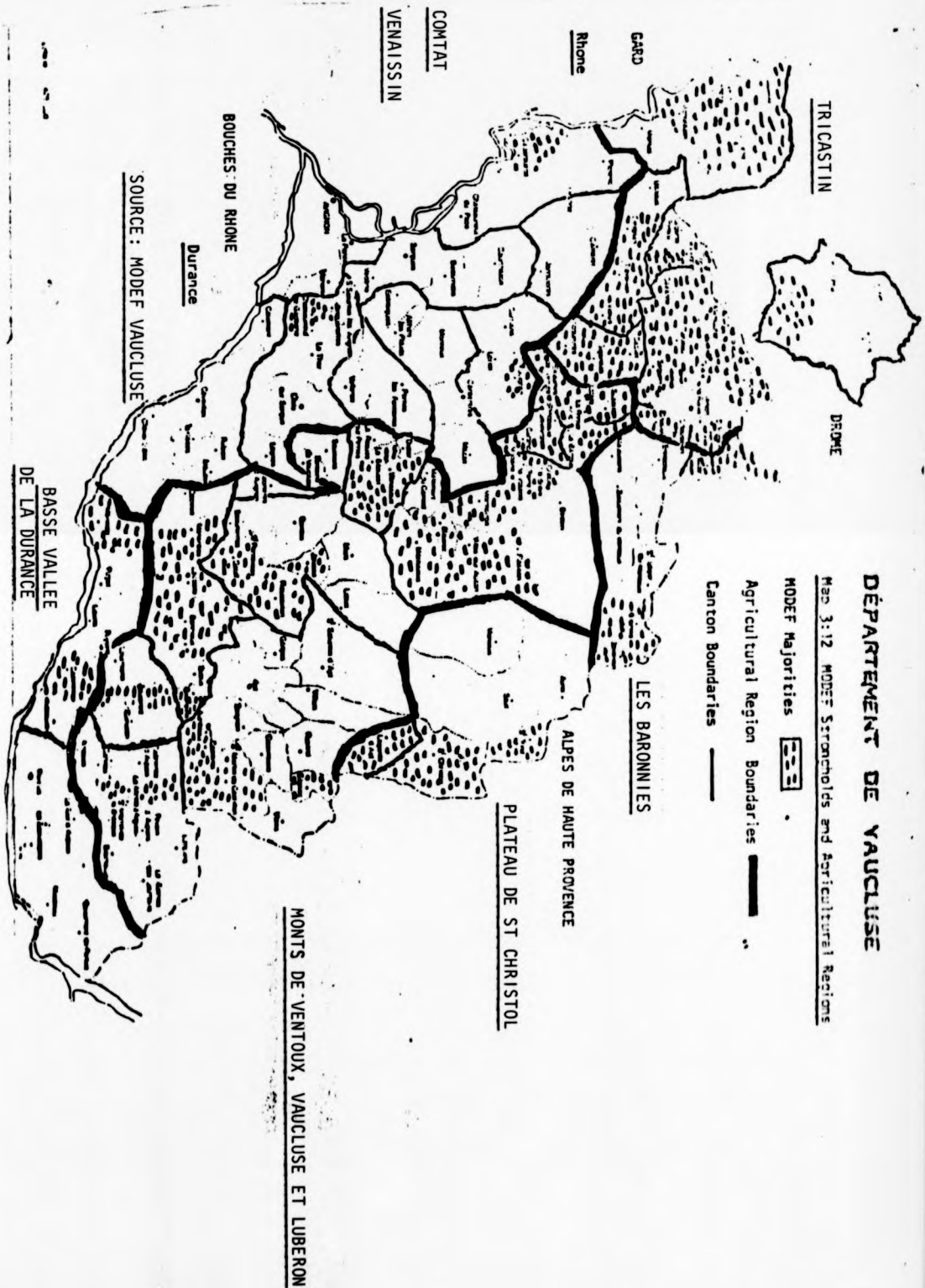
MODEP Majorities



Agricultural Region Boundaries



Canton Boundaries



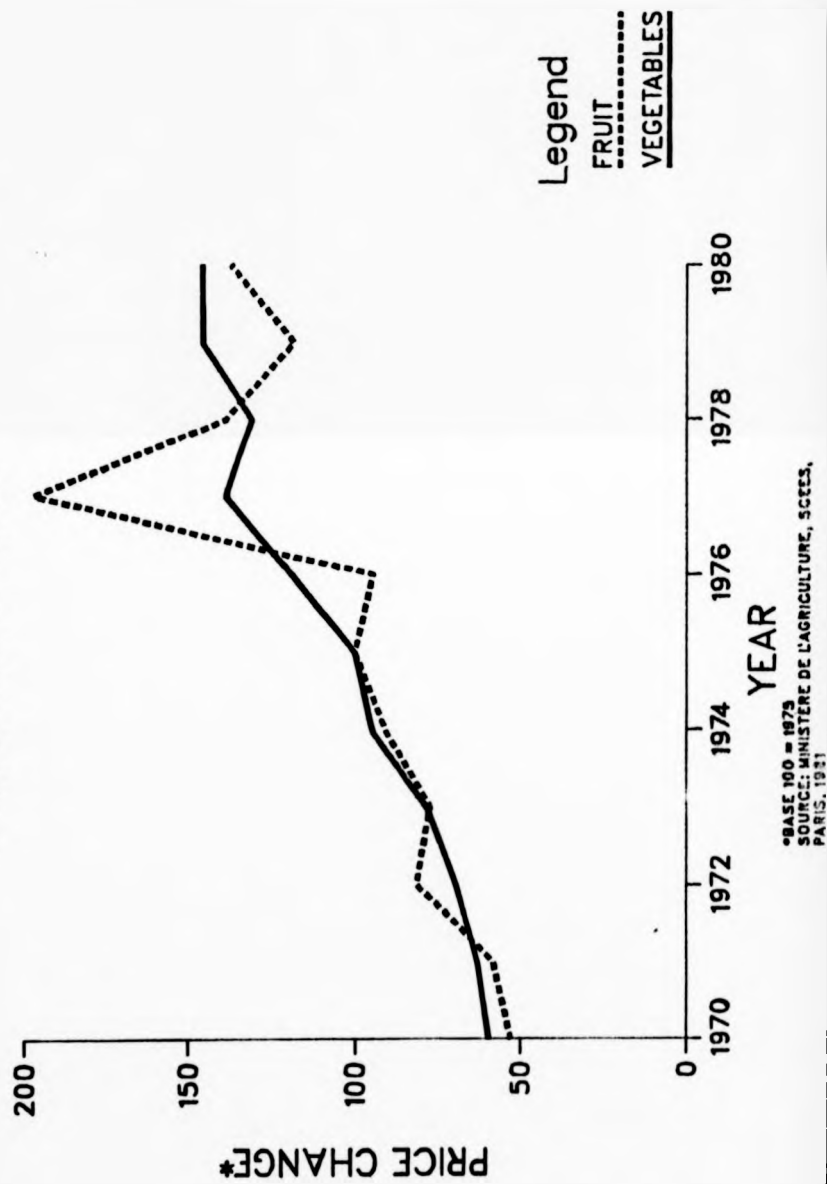
As a result, the natural advantages of the Comtat have not prevented the decline in the number of farmers over the 1955-1980 period being about the average for the department, though slightly less than that of France as a whole. Furthermore, the decline has been accompanied by a spectacular rise in the proportion of farms in the twenty hectares-plus category, a size which very definitely makes a farm a capitalist operation in the Comtat.

As for the organization of the market for fruit and vegetables, the farmers of the Comtat have been in a position where: "La soumission au négoce résulte de l'absence de régulation des marchés qui favorise les comportements dominateurs des négociants..." (51) Because of the lack of market organization, farmers have had to contend with large fluctuations in the prices of their produce. Graph 3:2 gives an idea of these fluctuations.

The dominant position of private merchants on the market is illustrated by the fact that seventy-five per cent of the output of fruit and vegetables in the department is purchased by these merchants, fifty per cent in the free for all of the marketplaces of the region such as Chateaurenard, Cavaillon and Carpentras and only twenty-five per cent through advance contracts. (52)

Attempts to bring some order to the industry have been limited. Co-operatives and producer groups have enjoyed little success, accounting for only ten per cent of output. This has been due to two things. The entrenched position of private enterprise has restricted the scope for co-operatives, a tendency which has been increased by the growing concentration of such enterprise and the penetration of multi-national capital into the region.(53) Rather than deal with a

GRAPH 3.2 FLUCTUATION IN FRUIT AND VEGETABLE  
PRICES 1970-1980





plethora of local firms, farmers have come more and more to find themselves dealing with large firms operating on a European, if not a world-wide, scale.

The other block on the development of co-operatives is the individualist mentality of the Comtat farmer. The Comtat has enjoyed the mixed blessing of a privileged position on a chaotic market. This has meant that though the dangers have been all too apparent, so have the rewards of success. This has led the co-operative sector to be used as 'l'assurance contre la mévente' rather as a positive instrument of emancipation. (54) Over 20 years ago, one writer described the behaviour of Provencal fruit and vegetable farmers in the following terms:

Certaines cooperatives sont anciennes, mais n'ont pas toujours prospéré, parce que l'esprit cooperative n'y était pas; le paysan adhèrait pour une somme minime, et vendant sa production au plus offrant, n'apportait à la cooperative que les fruits les moins bons ou ceux qu'il n'avait pas réussi à écouler. (55)

That this situation has hardly changed since then is confirmed by the daily ritual of Chateaufrenard and by many of those interviewed in the Vaucluse.

Grosso points out that the fruit and vegetable sector, contrary to Tavernier's conclusions, is not particularly favourable to MODEF. Grosso explains this in terms of the individualism of the fruit and vegetable farmers, which makes them ill-adapted to collective organization. (56) However, he fails to explain why such individualism should be so deep-rooted, the most simple and powerful explanation being

that such behaviour has given enough proofs of its success for it to remain a plausible strategy.

If one looks at the Comtat in terms of the typology used in the analysis of the Charente, there is an obvious problem of classification. In relation to the ownership of the means of transformation and the level of revenue, the Comtat is clearly on a par with the central Cognacais. But with respect to the predictability of income, it has similarities with the Confolentais. Although there is no necessary connection between the degree of security in terms of both size and predictability of income, there are several indications that this is the case in the Comtat. In the first place, given that the fluctuations in prices and incomes have taken place at a relatively high level of income, their importance is less than in cases where the fluctuations occur around a low average point. In the latter case, such insecurity produces a more immediate threat to the continued existence of the farm thanks to the limited margin of safety. Second, the importance of price fluctuations in the Comtat has been limited by the variety and frequency of crops, thus minimizing the danger of finding oneself dependent on a slow-selling crop. Finally, the emergence of a large capitalist sector in the Comtat implies that revenues are predictable enough to permit the intensive investment required by the capitalist farm. For these reasons, the Comtat should be placed in the same category as the central Cognacais. At least in this case, the predictive value of the conclusions drawn from the case of the Charente is confirmed. The level of support for MODEF in the Avignon constituency is consistent with that in the Cognac constituency and the blank spaces on the map of the Comtat in Map 3:11 are similar to those to be seen in the central Cognacais in Map 3:6.

B) THE TRICASTIN: The Tricastin is the main viticultural zone of the department, covering part of the Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée (AOC) Côtes du Rhône area and most of the AOC Côtes du Rhône-Villages area. Unlike the producers of less high quality wines, the wine growers of the Tricastin have tended to benefit from the problems associated with the income inelasticity of demand for agricultural produce. Whilst the consumption of ordinary table wine stagnates then eventually falls with rising urban incomes, the producers of AOC wines benefit from the increasing purchases of higher quality wines. By 1980, Côtes du Rhône producers held approximately sixteen per cent of the market whilst the Vaucluse was only exceeded by the Gironde and the Marne in the output of AOC wines. (57)

Nevertheless, the Tricastin has had to work hard to achieve this position in terms of raising the quality of the produce as well as being obliged to make the same heavy expenditure as the Comtat. For instance, the chemicals needed to treat the vines to fight off the various diseases to which are they susceptible has played a major part in the rise in the costs of production. In addition, despite the fact the Tricastin has made a major contribution to the French balance of payments by tripling the volume of exports between 1970 and 1980, the value of this produce, in terms of farm revenues remained stagnant. In reality, the Tricastin has had to run hard to stand still. This is reflected in the decline in the number of farms which has been slightly above average for the department. As for concentration, it has been the small to medium-scale sector, rather than the very small-scale enterprises, which have disappeared most rapidly.

As for the organization of the industry, it is as dominated by the co-operative sector as the Comtat is by the private sector. Seventy-five per cent of output is marketed through the co-operatives with most of the rest being handled by the "viticulteur recoltant", the capitalist growers with sufficient capital to acquire the equipment necessary to transform grapes into bottles of wine and with sufficient expertise to sell their own wine to wholesalers and retailers. (58)

In terms of security, the Tricastin resembles the peripheral Cognacais, producing for a market in which a certain degree of stability exists but in which the level of competition is persistently increasing. Nevertheless, there appears to be a major difference between the Vaucluse and the Charente. In the Charente, co-operative dominance has been inimical to the growth of MODEF. But the cooperative-dominated Tricastin is MODEF's No. 1 stronghold in the Vaucluse.

Rather than proving that the conclusions valid for the Charente are inapplicable to the Vaucluse, this reveals that it is necessary to introduce some refinements into the analysis. The first point which must be made is that the co-operative sector is not a monolith, it covers a wide variety of types of enterprise. In this diversity, the co-operatives of the Montmorelien and those of the Tricastin are at the opposite ends of the spectrum. The major difference between the co-operatives of the Charente and those of the Tricastin lies in their scale. There is simply no comparison between the Union Laitière Pyrénées Aquitaine Charentes and the co-operatives to be found in Tricastin villages such as Sainte Cécile-les-Vignes. The process of amalgamation and bureaucratization has not made much headway in the region. Co-operatives are based on the commune rather than the region or the department. Each village has its own co-operative, or even two

as in the case of Ste Cécile, serving to dispose of local produce. This is mainly due to the quality and reputation of this produce which means that farmers, in communes such as Gigondas, Rasteau, Vacqueyras, etc, depend on the preservation of the individual identity of the product. There is no incentive to amalgamate to produce anonymous wine.

As a result, the lack of bureaucratization has prevented the co-operatives from either insulating their members from the rest of the economy and its logic or inflicting the costs of crisis on their members in order to preserve themselves. There is an unusual degree of involvement and understanding between the co-operatives and their members, reinforced by the technical and economic awareness of the region's farmers. In effect, if the co-operative relieves the farmer of the burden of producing and marketing his own wine, it has also contributed substantially to the economic education of its members, particularly with respect to the subordination of agriculture to industry and commerce.

Finally, in the Tricastin, as in the rest of the Midi, there is a close relationship between co-operatives and unions. Co-operative leaders are often also the local union leaders. Co-operatives are therefore regarded in a much more political light, as an instrument of defence for the industry rather than as simple economic institutions.

If one makes this distinction between bureaucratized and participatory co-operatives, the situation of the Tricastin is much closer to that of the peripheral Cognacais. Though private industry and commerce intervenes much later in the process of production and transformation in the Tricastin, the fact remains that it does do so. Private enterprise ultimately dominates the industry through its control of commercial

circuits, particularly in the export markets on which both the Cognacais and the Tricastin depend. Though the co-operatives of the Tricastin may have more bargaining power than the individual farmers of the peripheral Cognacais, it is not comparable to the kind of influence which giants such as the ULPAC can exercise in commercial negotiations. The economic similarities between the peripheral Cognacais and the Tricastin are reflected in the comparable levels of support for MODEF in the two regions.

C) MONTS DE VENTOUX, VAUCLUSE AND LUBERON: Despite being classified as three parts of the same region, there are great contrasts between the Ventoux, Vaucluse and Luberon zones. Ventoux covers the Beaumes-Carpentras-Nord cantons and the northern half of Mormoiron, the plateau de Vaucluse covers Pernes and the southern half of Mormoiron whilst Luberon covers Apt, Gordes and Bonnieux. To the extent that these three areas form a coherent region, this is due to the type of Provencal polyculturalism which is practiced there. The main products of the region are fruit, wine and vegetables.

Unlike the regions already considered, the farmers of the region do not have the same advantages which have helped to protect Comtat and Tricastin agriculture. With the exception of the Beaumes-Carpentras area, they do not benefit from either the irrigation system which allows the Comtat to minimize the dangers of the market or the reputation which sells the wines of the Tricastin. In particular, imports of fruit and vegetables have posed a major threat to this region. Such imports increased throughout the 1970s with extensive and increasing Spanish competition. Certain product markets, such as aubergines, witnessed the tripling of imports. (59) However, the problem is accentuated in Ventoux, Vaucluse and Luberon by the question of time. Because of the

lack of irrigation and the higher altitude of this region, its products enter the market at a later date than those of the Comtat. And a week is a long time in Vaucluse agriculture as the fluctuations in prices show. The region is therefore much more vulnerable to foreign competition from Spain and Italy than the Comtat.

The lower incomes of the region are self-perpetuating. There are two classic examples of this. Because of these lower incomes, the region's fruit and vegetable growers have been less able to attempt to control the supply of their produce onto the market in order to influence the price. For instance, in the disastrous summer of 1981 where virtually all fruit and vegetable prices were depressed, the Chamber of Agriculture advised farmers that the EEC apple harvest would fall far short of demand. Given that other prices had been so low, the Chamber warned farmers that it was necessary to avoid panic selling, or else apple prices would collapse too. By delivering apples to the market gradually, higher prices could be sustained. The problem with such advice is that the farmers most able to follow it were those who had less need to do so. Postponing receipt of income, and even perhaps paying cold storage costs, was a much more practical proposition for the richer farmers of the Comtat than it was for those walking a tightrope in Luberon or on the plateau de Vaucluse. (60)

Yet another example of the self-perpetuating nature of inequality between the regions is the case of irrigation. The obvious answer to the lack of water in the dry zones around Apt would be to create an irrigation system. But the effort to irrigate the Calavon valley is the local equivalent of the Channel Tunnel project, always under consideration but never under construction. Though the Conseil Général

and the Parc naturel régional de Luberon provided the impetus to get the project off the ground in the 1970s, by the time official approval had been secured another problem had emerged. By the early 1980s, local farmers were beginning to be very suspicious of the project. In a context of permanent crisis on the market, such an irrigation system would immediately increase costs without providing much prospect of increased revenue. (61)

As for wine production in the region, there is a hierarchy descending from north to south. That section of the canton of Beaumes which is in the region still forms part of the Côtes du Rhône-Villages zone. Therefore its produce is a combination of Côtes du Rhône and the lesser known Côtes du Ventoux AOC. Beaumes has therefore been able to compete with the Tricastin on more or less equal terms. At the other end of the scale, at the other end of the region, the Vin Délimité de Qualité Supérieure (VDQS) Côtes du Luberon has not benefitted from the changing patterns of urban expenditure to the same extent. Though not as vulnerable to Italian competition as the non-AOC producers of the Herault and the Aude, the intermediate status of VDQS has left it open to a degree of competition which the department's AOC producers have not had to face. (62)

MODEF strongholds in the region are to be found in three areas. Two of these areas, the Mormoiron-Pernes group and the Bonnieux-Gordes group, fit into the model described above in section Three. In terms of security and ownership of the means of transformation, they resemble the Confolentais. (The fruit and vegetables sector outweighs wine in importance.) MODEF strength in the two regions is broadly comparable. On the other hand, MODEF's weakness in the canton of Apt reinforces the assumption that MODEF's success in such circumstances is not inevitable.



Unfortunately for the symmetry of the argument presented here, MODEF's success in the Beaumes-Carpentras region contradicts the argument that economic success brings its own political rewards. By inter-regional and infra-regional standards, this area has been highly successful. Though MODEF's strength can be partly attributed to the experience of collective organization and discipline arising from the co-operative organization of the market, it is necessary to look to the non-economic factors to explain this attraction to MODEF. That the position of Beaumes is wholly exceptional is testified to by the mixture of suspicion and admiration with which MODEF activists in other parts of the region view the MODEF leaders and activists from Beaumes.

D) THE MINOR REGIONS: The Plateau de St Christol owes its fame, such as it is, to pacifist literature and military grandeur. Giono's idyllic picture of shepherds and their flocks has been replaced by de Gaulle's vision of nuclear missiles and their guardians. As in Giono's time, the Plateau remains dominated by sheep farming. It has therefore, like most mountain regions, suffered from the lack of organization of meat markets. And like other mountain zones, it has suffered a rapid decline. Between 1955-80, the region experienced a forty-seven per cent decline in the number of farmers, well above both the departmental and the national average. As in the case of the Charente's most depressed canton, Montemboeuf, this type of decline is not conducive to MODEF. Farmers concentrate on eking out a living rather than on taking positive action to defend their region. (63)

The Baronnies cover most of the canton of Malaucène and the communes of Puymeras and Faucon in Vaison. The part of the region which lies in the Vaucluse forms the northern foothills of Mont Ventoux and is therefore distinguished from the rest of the northern Vaucluse by its altitude and the difficulty of its terrain. The main produce of the region is Côtes du Ventoux AOC and fruit. But it does not have the advantages of the lower parts of the Ventoux region. In most of the region, fruit predominates over wine, so in terms of its economic organization it is closer to Luberon than Ventoux. Malaucène resembles Apt as an area in which MODEF has failed to capitalize upon the opportunities available to it.

Covering those communes in Pertuis and Cadenet bordering on the Durance, the Basse Vallée de la Durance is a polycultural region. Whilst fruit and vegetables are grown on the plains, the hillsides are occupied by vineyards and cereals. This is the most important of the minor regions, and one in which MODEF had an increasing impact during the 1970s. In terms of altitude and water supply, the region is comparable to the Beaumes-Carpentras area of Ventoux. But the difference in quality between Côtes du Ventoux AOC and Côtes du Luberon VDQS gives the region an intermediate status between Ventoux and Luberon in terms of the security of income. In terms of market organization, the predominance of fruit over wine (except in Cadenet) makes it closer to Luberon than to Ventoux. However, MODEF's growth in the region in the 1970s meant that MODEF support came to reflect the pattern established in parts of Luberon, such as Bonnieux, in the 1960s.

What is left of the typology with which this analysis begun. Of the major regions, the Comtat and the Monts de Vaucluse and Luberon fit into the typology without difficulty. As for its predictive value in terms of the level of MODEF support, the Comtat and Vaucluse-Luberon are more or less comparable to the central Cognacais and the Confolentais respectively.

It is the Tricastin and the Beaumes-Carpentras-Nord area which provide the greatest problems. In the case of the Tricastin, it is necessary to introduce a modification into the analysis, i.e. the distinction between bureaucratized and participatory co-operatives. In the latter, farmers find themselves in a much more direct relationship to industry and commerce, a relationship which makes their situation closer to that of the peripheral Cognacais than to the Angoumois-Ruffecois or the Montmorelien. The Beaumes area calls into question the hypothesis about the connection between economic success and political quiescence. It shows the necessity of placing these economic factors into their political and sociological environment, since such factors may override the effects of economic conditions.

#### 1.1 ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS

We now have a basis for evaluating alternative explanations for the distribution of MODEF support. Two in particular deserve attention. The first is the connection between type of product and the second and most important is the EEC.

Grosso has pointed out the connection between the distribution of the vineyards of the Vaucluse and the distribution of the MODEF majorities. There is an extremely close overlap between the maps of these two distributions. Grosso also points out that fruit and vegetable growers in the Vaucluse are much less favourable to MODEF. This is certainly true if one compares the two essentially monocultural regions, the Comtat and the Tricastin. Problems arise when one considers the mixed zones of the Monts. These are also relatively favourable to MODEF and it is impossible to detect whether particular communes are more dependent on the fruit and vegetable side or the wine side of their operations. And as Grosso himself points out, the Chateauneuf-du-Pape AOC zone has proved MODEF-resistant. (64)

Extending this analysis to the Charente shows that this type of explanation is untenable. If one looks at the wine growers of the Cognacais, their divided allegiance to the FNSEA and MODEF is patently clear. Nevertheless, to look at the problem in reverse, a comparison between the two departments makes it clear that MODEF reaches its peak performance in wine growing areas. Grosso gives some of the reasons why this should be so:

On a toujours prêté... des opinions politiques plus avancées aux viticulteurs. Ici, leur milieu, depuis longtemps gagné à l'organisation cooperative de la fabrication du vin et de sa commercialisation accepterait plus volontiers des solutions plus radicales... il est plus homogène dans ses occupations et préoccupations, partant dans ses options. L'action syndicale y est peut être plus facile d'autant plus que, souvent libéré des problèmes de vente du vin et bénéficiaire d'un calendrier agricole

moins chargé, le viticulteur est sans doute plus disponible pour la confrontation des idées et l'action. (65)

This shows that the wine grower's position as an 'aristocrat of agriculture' makes him ready to organize and support organizations such as MODEF. It is the level of security and the organization of the market which, however, explains why these 'aristocrats' turn into activists. It is the relatively secure but menaced position of the Tricastin and the peripheral Cognacais which gives its farmers both the opportunity and the incentive to resist the development of capitalism in agriculture. By contrast their counterparts in Chateauneuf-du-Pape and Segonzac may have the opportunity but they do not have the incentive since they are the prime beneficiaries of this capitalist development.

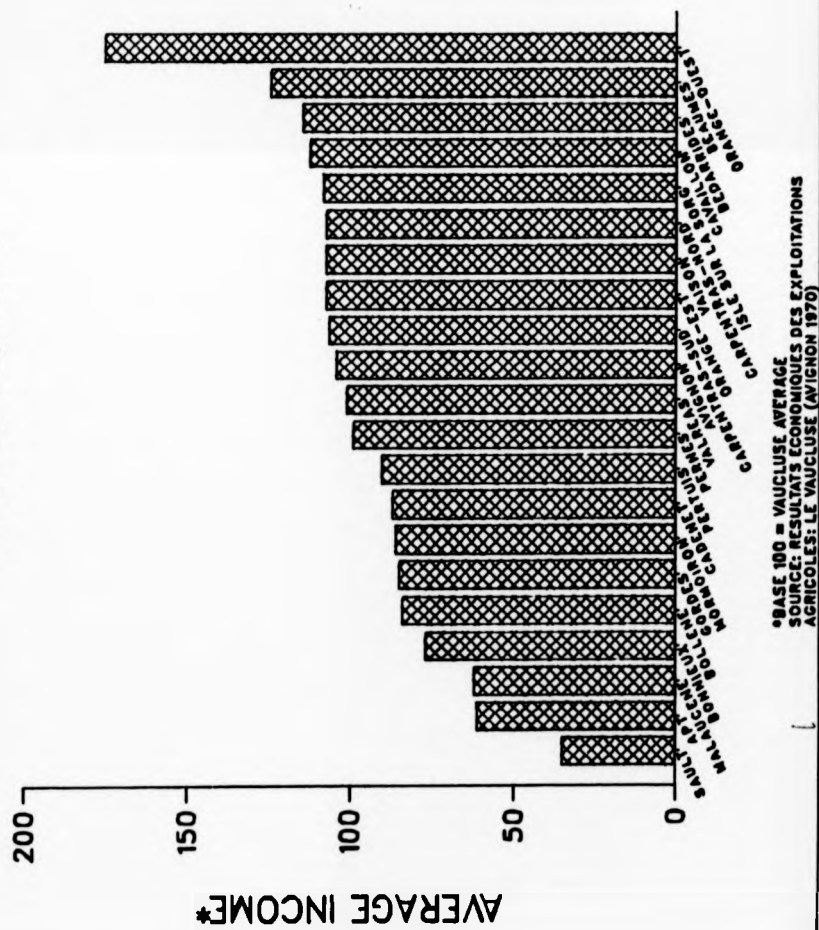
As for the question of the impact of the EEC on the distribution of support for MODEF, this is a question raised by Tavernier in his studies of MODEF. Tavernier has argued that much of MODEF support has stemmed from hostility to the EEC. In particular, Tavernier claims that this is the explanation why the technically advanced farmers of the Vaucluse should associate themselves with such an allegedly conservative organization. (66) In order to assess the validity of this claim, one has to consider the impact of the EEC on each region on the basis of the evidence above. Until the late 1970s, the Comtat's relationship to the Common Market was, on the whole, beneficial. New markets were opened up on European markets but excessive competition on the domestic market was avoided. Though the Tricastin has always had an export orientation, the EEC again facilitated exports without providing too much in the way of competition. It is the Monts region which has been the real victim of

the EEC and the advantages conceded by the Community to non-EEC states such as Spain. Although the level of MODEF support in the region may be seen as a reflection of this, it should also be remembered that the Tricastin is the strongest MODEF region. If one considers the Charente as well, the point becomes even clearer. Over the period of MODEF's existence, the EEC was beneficial to the Angoumois-Ruffecois and the Montmorelien and had a more or less neutral effect on both parts of the Cognacais. (67) Only the Confolentais can claim to have consistently suffered from the EEC, and even in this case the region's problems predate the EEC. Once again, though MODEF is strong in this region, it is still the peripheral Cognacais which is the strongest zone of MODEF support. It would appear that though the 'depredations' of the EEC offer an advantage to MODEF, MODEF is not simply an expression of 'le nationalisme légumier'. MODEF is quite capable of securing the support of farmers whose grievances are based on domestic considerations. There is both a class-based as well as a nationalist perspective sustaining MODEF.

#### 11. CLASS DIFFERENTIATION IN THE VAUCLUSE

What do these differences between and within the regions mean in terms of the nature and extent of differentiation in the department. Thanks to a special study on relative farm revenues in the Vaucluse, there is some firm statistical evidence to illustrate the extent of inequality within the department. (68) Graph 3:3 shows the relative position of each canton in terms of gross farm incomes in 1970. As one would expect, four of the top five cantons are in the Comtat whilst those in the Tricastin are in the top half of the scale. The Plateau de Vaucluse

GRAPH 3.3 AVERAGE FARM INCOME BY CANTON,  
VAUCLUSE, 1970



cantons are in the lower half whilst Luberon is on the lowest level accompanied by the Plateau de St Christol and the Baronnies. But, as in the Charente, it is necessary to look at the perception of inequality as well as the objective indicators and to discover which groups are compared with which. To the extent that the Comtat farmers recognize inequality, they can only perceive themselves to be the beneficiaries. On the other hand, though the Tricastin enjoys an above average position in the department, its self-comparison with the Comtat makes sure that it sees itself as a victim of inequality. As for the other regions, the Beaumes-Carpentras-Nord zone of Ventoux is in competition with the Tricastin in disposing of its wine and with the Comtat in selling its fruit and vegetables. Thus sandwiched between the most comfortable regions, it compares itself with them rather than the less privileged sections of the rest of the Monts region. Similarly, the competition which the fruit and vegetables farmers of the Plateau de Vaucluse and of Luberon confront is the battle for markets with the farmers of the Comtat. This provides a solid basis for antagonism between the regions, and hence helps to explain MODEF's strong position in the Monts compared to its subordinate status in the Comtat. The Baronnies deserves some attention because it provides an example of an unusual case, one where the perception of inequality hinders rather than assists MODEF. The Baronnies canton of Malaucène is cut off from the rest of the department by the Tricastin and the Beaumes area of Ventoux. Since these areas are much better off compared to Malaucène, inequality is on the doorsteps of Malaucène farmers. The rich farmer is epitomized by the neighbours in Beaumes, which is of course dominated by MODEF. In this perspective it is, paradoxically, MODEF which represents the emergence of a capitalist sector rather than the FDSEA.



With respect to the contrast between inter-regional and infra-regional, compatible and conflictual forms of inequality, the Vaucluse does not reflect the Charente pattern. There are two major differences between the two departments. First, there is no case of inter-regional conflictual inequality in the Vaucluse. Superficially, the contrast between Ventoux and Luberon provides a basis for such a conflict but this is to ignore the fact that the contrasts within the Monts are overshadowed by the presence of the Comtat. The second difference is perhaps more important. On the basis of the Charente evidence, one would have predicted that the absence of a direct conflict between Comtat and Tricastin would prove unfavourable to MODEF. But the opposite is true which suggests that the Tricastin farmers have a much more sophisticated perception of inequality than farmers elsewhere, a perception in which experience is reinforced by a political analysis. There is little direct competition between the two regions, except to some extent between the fruit and vegetable growers of the canton of Bollène and the Comtat or between the wine growers of Chateauneuf-du-Pape and those of Gigondas. However, there are developments in the Comtat which indicate what the future capitalist development of agriculture could bring. Examples include the encouragement provided to the "viticulteur recoltant" by the success of Chateauneuf-du-Pape and the growth of this capitalist viticulture as witnessed by the creation of the Association Nationale des Vignerons Récoltants in 1978. Given the need for a political framework into which such developments can be inserted if they are to have any consequences in terms of farm unionism, it would seem that the coexistence of the areas of peak MODEF and PCF performance in the Tricastin is not entirely coincidental. (69)

## 12. THE POLITICS OF THE VAUCLUSE

Like the rest of the Midi, the Vaucluse enjoys a reputation for radicalism, a reputation which tends to neglect the other features of Mediterranean politics. In fact, two traditions have coexisted in the Vaucluse, one of popular radicalism being accompanied by clientelist notablism.

The departmental Archives testify to the variety, if not to the extent, of such popular radicalism in the 1930s.<sup>(70)</sup> The CGPT, the CNP and the Dorgerists were all active. With the war and the Resistance, the tradition of self-organization strengthened. The sufferings inflicted on the department, and in particular the Tricastin, through the massacres carried out by retreating SS units in the summer of 1944 in villages such as Séguret further reinforced the activist orientation. That this activism was not confined to those on the Left is demonstrated by the success of Poujadism in the Vaucluse. <sup>(71)</sup>

At the same time, notablism remained an essential element in the political life of the department. Daladier's pre-war eminence reposed on a Radical-socialist network which involved a quarter of the mayors in 1939. <sup>(72)</sup> Though the Radical Party may have lost the war, Daladier soldiered on well into the 1950s, maintaining his Carpentras town hall and Parliamentary seats. By the time Daladier faded away, SFIO notablism was ready to fill the void.

# DÉPARTEMENT DE VAUCLUSE

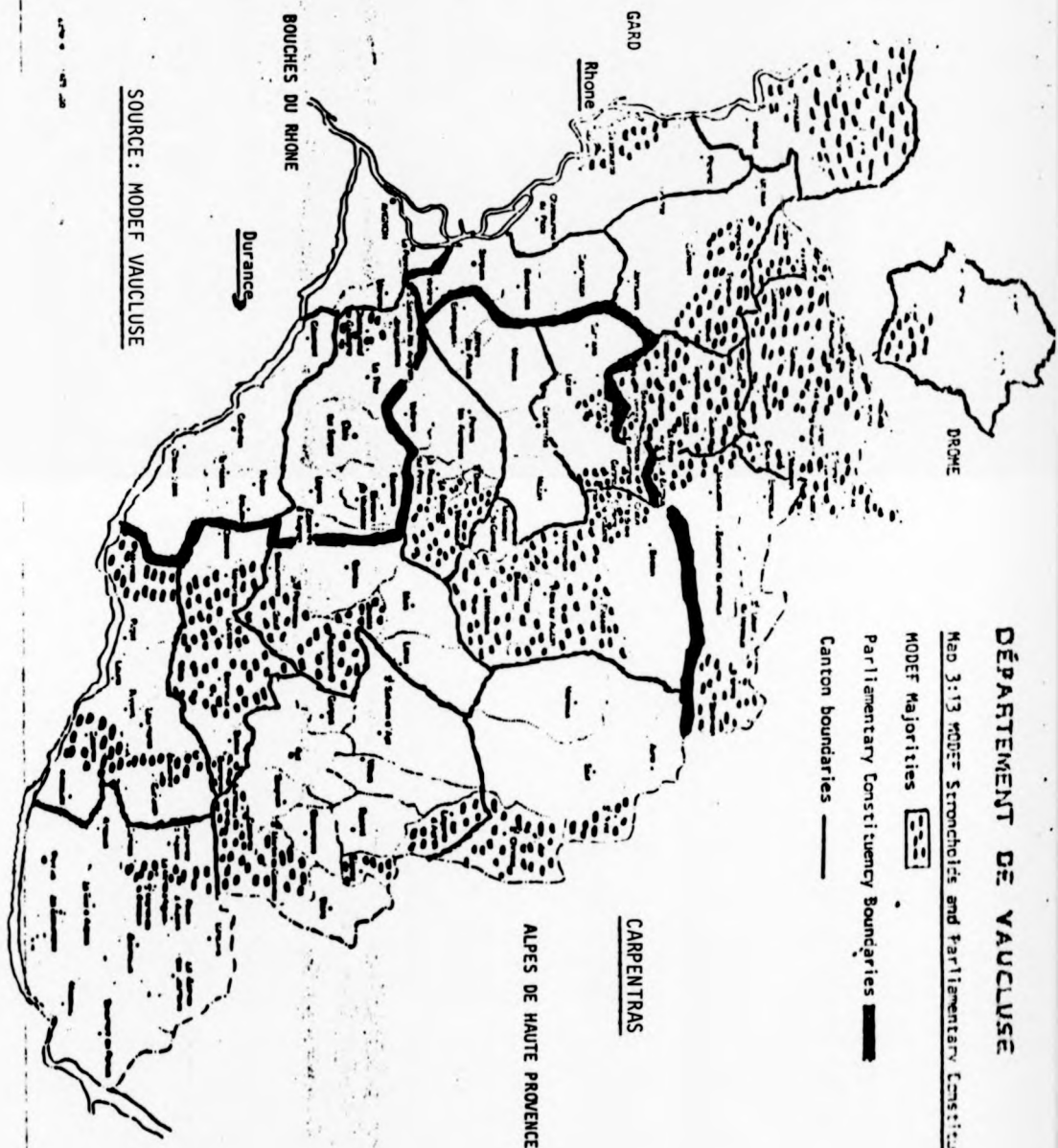
Ned 3:13 MODEP Stronchoïd and Parliamentary Constituencies

MODEP Majorities



Parliamentary Constituency Boundaries

Canton boundaries



ORANGE

GARD

Rhone

AVIGNON

BOUCHES DU RHONE

Durance

CARPENTRAS

ALPES DE HAUTE PROVENCE

SOURCE: MODEP VAUCLUSE

A) AVIGNON: If Carpentras was the centre of political life in Daladier's day, Avignon has taken on that position since. As the constituency in which notablism found its new home, it bears remarkable similarities to Angoulême. Henri Duffaud, as deputy-mayor and later senator-mayor of Avignon, was the dominant figure in the post-war politics of the constituency. As a protege of Gaston Defferre, Duffaud's Avignon was run on lines similar to those of Marseille (although without some of the more dubious aspects of the port's politics). In ideological terms, Avignon socialism was heavily anti-Communist, in instrumental terms, clientelistic, indeed nepotistic.

The primacy of anti-Communism was even clearer in agricultural politics. If, on an electoral level, the department divided in left-right terms, the main cleavage in agricultural politics was between the SFIO and the PCF. Duffaud's political dominance was assisted by his close alliance with the FDSEA leader, Robert Dion, mayor of Morières, sometime senator and later president of the Chamber of Agriculture. Dion's political options were such that he failed to adapt to the transformation of the SFIO into the PS and became one of the small group of irreconcilables expelled for opposing the Union of the Left.

The existence of such clientelistic networks, as one would expect, seriously hindered the growth of MODEF in the Avignon area. Since the FDSEA-SFIO/PS alliance provided the link between Duffaud and his agricultural constituents, farmers had little incentive to organize themselves and even less to turn to MODEF. In terms of protecting individual interests and of access to services, it made more sense to address oneself to the FDSEA.

B) CARPENTRAS: Though Carpentras had been the centre of the Daladier web, clientelistic patterns broke down with no dominant political leader, or even dominant party leaders, emerging. Throughout the period of MODEF's existence, the politics of the constituency has been a struggle for electoral supremacy between the SFIO/PS and centrists/centre right, a struggle in which neither side has ever become completely dominant. Over the 1962-78 period, the constituency was represented by three different socialists (in 1962, 1967, 1973) one Gaullist (1968) and one Giscardian (1978). Though the Giscardian junior minister Maurice Charretier appeared to be establishing his control over the Right, this took a serious blow with the PS landslide in the Vaucluse in June 1981. In any case, his influence derived mainly from his control of Carpentras town hall, not from support in the surrounding rural areas. In this context of instability, with no dominant political leader or party machine, MODEF activists had more room to manoeuvre, attempting to provide the services supplied by the FDSEA-Duffaud alliance in Avignon.

C) ORANGE: Orange resembles Carpentras in the sense that it has lacked a Duffaud-type personality. On the other hand, there is a substantial difference as far as party leadership is concerned since there has been a high degree of continuity. Of the five general elections considered, two men dominated the contest, a contest decided by a very narrow margin in all bar the 1968 election. Leon Bérard, the Gaullist leader, fought a more or less private battle with Fernand Marin of the PCF, a political double act only spoiled by the PS in 1981. Though Bérard won three times (1962, 1968 and 1973) to Marin's two victories (1967, 1978), the margin was never large enough to guarantee him the security required to establish an Avignon-style clientelistic network. This combination of



These figures suggest that the assumption of a connection between MODEF and PCF support, particularly in so far as the Orange/Tricastin area is concerned are unfounded. The low number of cases in the Avignon constituency precludes the use of the contingency co-efficient but for the other constituencies  $C = 0.91$  in terms of the level of the PCF vote in both Carpentras and Orange. There is, however, a significant difference between the two constituencies with respect to the relative position of the PCF within the Left since, in this case,  $C = 0.96$  for Carpentras and  $0.77$  for Orange.

Orange and Confolens are the only constituencies examined here in which there is a greater correlation between MODEF support and the relative strength of the PCF within the Left than there is with the level of PCF support. What this indicates is that MODEF, within these constituencies, benefits more from the relative weakness of the non-communist Left than it does from a high level of PCF support. But there is a major difference between the two constituencies in that MODEF held the Orange Chamber of Agriculture seats for many years but was never victorious in Confolens. This difference stems from the different political environments of the two departments. In the Charente, it has been seen that the divide in agricultural politics is between the Right and the PCF-PS-MRG alliance. For MODEF to win elections, it must secure the support of all three sections though a strong organization can be constructed on the basis of PCF activists and voters alone. In the Vaucluse, the situation is different since the political divide in agricultural politics cuts through the Left with the MRG being of no political significance. Since the SFIO/PS apparatus was so closely allied to the FDSEA, MODEF's chances have depended on, not so much the

unity of the Left, but the relative weakness of the PS and of its SFIO old guard in particular. This interpretation is further supported by the coincidence of the rise of the PCF relative to the PS and the growth in support for MODEF in the Carpentras constituency during the 1970s. In the Vaucluse, therefore, MODEF's interests have been furthered by the weakness of the PS, rather than by the strength of the PCF or the Left as a whole.

#### 14. THE QUESTION OF LEADERSHIP

So far the conditions which allow MODEF to operate and secure support have been analysed. The question of whether and how MODEF realizes its potential has been postponed until now. This is, of course, a very large question to which the following chapters, especially Chapter 4 give a long answer. Without pre-empting that answer, there is one element which must be dealt with at this stage. This is the question of local leadership.

Given the weak apparatus within MODEF and the lack of material incentive to join the organization, the face of MODEF which is visible to farmers is that of its local leadership. In practice, the degree to which MODEF makes the most of a favourable economic, sociological and political environment or overcomes hindrances is largely in the hands of the local representatives of MODEF. This helps to explain why many communes with similar environments vote in entirely different ways in professional elections. This is seen in the number of dispersed communes in which MODEF has secured majorities and the way in which certain communes in



cantons dominated by MODEF have held out for the FNSEA, e.g. the commune of Sonnevile in the canton of Rouillac. MODEF's success has depended, therefore, on its local leaders and activists proving that they are more capable than their FNSEA counterparts and establishing their greater credibility as union leaders.(73) The idea of good leadership is therefore a relative one.

Some of the instability in the MODEF vote can be attributed to this problem. Perfectly competent MODEF leaders who succeeded in securing substantial successes for MODEF later find themselves confronted a new group of FNSEA leaders emerging out of the CNJA. A classic instance of this took place in the canton of Villefagnan where MODEF activists who had proved their capacities in the 1960s found themselves challenged by a new generation of FNSEA activists led by Raymond Mangon, a future president of the UDSEA, in the 1970s. As a result, the USDEA recovered the ground lost in the 1960s. Similarly, the importance of local leadership was demonstrated by the defection of the MODEF leader, Georges Deslandes, to the FNSEA in the mid-1970s. The consequent transfer of the loyalties of his supporters in the canton of Chabanais helps to explain the losses sustained by MODEF in the 1979 elections.

This is a two-way process. MODEF has benefited from the emergence of its own new leaders. For instance, the growth of support for MODEF in the Carpentras constituency is generally attributed to the new leaders who took over in the early 1970s. In particular, MODEF's success in Carpentras-Nord is considered to be primarily due to the work of Jean Chardon, a recognition given substance by his election to the MODEF National Council in 1982. Similarly, MODEF's progression around Apt and Pertuis in the latter half of the 1970s coincides with the supply of new leaders and activists coming from MODEF's young farmers organization,

the Federation Nationale des Jeunes du MODEF (FNJ-MODEF).

This is a point explicitly recognized by MODEF leaders and activists themselves. The most popular explanation of infra-departmental variations and, to a certain extent, inter-departmental variations in MODEF support amongst those interviewed was the difference in the capacity and energy of local leaders. It is an explanation almost always used to explain the difficult cases. In the case of Beaumes, a canton which surprises even MODEF activists by its commitment to MODEF, the MODEF leadership is given virtually all the credit for its success over the obstacles in its way. Understandably, the opposite is not quite so true. Though weaknesses in MODEF strength are, in cases where MODEF's influence is less than it is considered it ought to be, sometimes explained with reference to the nature of the local leadership, this is rarely made explicit.

#### 15. ONE AND A HALF MODEFS

To a large extent, the similarities between the two departments are such that MODEF, in both cases, is a result of the same pressures of economic development, sociological change and political conflict. There are several obvious parallels between the two departments. As far as the economic situation is concerned, the Comtat and the central Cognacais both testify to the connection between a relatively secure branch of agriculture dependent on private enterprise and low levels of support for MODEF. On the other hand, the Confolentais and the Monts de Ventoux, Vaucluse and Luberon reveal a connection between insecurity in a privately-controlled branch of agriculture and high levels of support for MODEF. Similarly, the Comtat and the central Cognacais occupy positions at the top of the hierarchy of class in their respective

departments. The Confolentais and the Monts at the opposite end of the scale confirm the connection between class differentiation and support for MODEF.

It is the comparison between the Tricastin and the peripheral Cognacais which presents the greatest difficulty. Both share a relatively secure position compared to other regions of their departments and a strong MODEF presence. However, the organization of the transformation process in the two regions differs, the Tricastin being dominated by co-operatives. However, the difference between the co-operatives of the Charente and those of the Tricastin, between the participatory and the bureaucratized, is such that the apparent similarities are illusory. In practice, the Tricastin shares the effective subordination of the peripheral Cognacais to private enterprise and dependence on a competitive international market. Similarly, there is a contrast between the peripheral Cognacais perception of inequality based on the intra-regional conflict with the central Cognacais and the more abstract politicized conception of the Tricastin.

Nevertheless, it is the different political environment of the Vaucluse and the Charente which leads to the conclusion that there are one and a half MODEF's. Though both departments confirm the importance of the farmer-political system linkage, the partisan context of the two departments is considerably different. In both cases MODEF represents the convinced supporters of the Union of the Left. In the Charente, this includes the entire Left but in the Vaucluse this is limited to the PCF and the left of the PS. In consequence, the relative strength of the PCF within the Left is a better indicator of MODEF support in the Vaucluse than it is the Charente.

CHAPTER 4 BUREAUCRACY, CAMPAIGNING AND SOCIAL WORK:THE ORGANIZATION OF MODEF1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter seeks to describe MODEF's organizational arrangements and the way in which it has operated in practice. It will be seen that these two factors are closely linked with one another, the inadequacy of the apparatus precluding certain types of activity whilst the types of behaviour adopted by MODEF perpetuate the organizational weaknesses.

The methods by which unity is maintained within the organization, given the diversity of the economic interests and political affiliations of the membership, are examined. Particular attention is paid to the role of the young farmers' wing of MODEF - the Federation Nationale des Jeunes du MODEF (FNJ) and its potentially disruptive role within MODEF.

The latter part of the chapter is concerned with the activities of MODEF. Both its activity designed to influence agricultural policy and its internal maintenance work are considered, the former being heavily politicized whilst the latter is characterized by a begrudging clientelism. Finally, the potential conflict between "institutional needs" and formal objectives is discussed in the light of the evidence and of the relevant literature.(1)

## 2. THE APPARATUS

The relative success which MODEF has achieved in its battle against state and FNSEA hostility is all the more remarkable when one considers the limited resources with which MODEF has had to contend. By comparison to the FNSEA, with its Parisian headquarters off the Champs Elysée and its army of officials in the provinces, MODEF's administrative apparatus is ludicrous. In 1981, of the national leadership, only four members were able to devote themselves to MODEF affairs on a full-time basis. Of the twenty-three people employed by MODEF, the Landes Federation employed sixteen, the Charente Federation two, the Tarn-et-Garonne and Côtes du Nord Federations one each and the national headquarters in Angoulême three. Most of these were technical and administrative staff. Apart from the national administrators only the departmental administrators in Mont-de-Marsan and Montauban, along with the FNJ organizer for the Landes could be regarded as "political" full-timers - in the sense that, although not members of the elected leadership, they played an important role in the leadership of their Federations.

Similarly, MODEF's means of communication with the farm population was limited. Apart from the obvious personal contact between its activists and other farmers in the villages, MODEF had to rely on its own press.(2) The national organization published L'Exploitant Familial every month. Special editions were produced by each region which supplied enough material to justify it. The Vaucluse and the Breton Federations were most successful in this respect. Two specifically regional newspapers were also produced, La Charente Agricole by the Federations of Poitou-Charentes concentrating mainly on the Charente and

Les Information Agricoles published by the Landes Federation in Mont-de-Marsan. Again, this was comical compared to the blanket coverage of the FNSEA which had various national publications and a newspaper for each department. The FNSEA, with the assistance of the Chamber of Agriculture, had enough resources to provide every farmer in the department with free copies of the newspaper - whether he requested it or not.(3) MODEF's distribution was limited more or less to its own members. Only in exceptional cases where a dynamic local leadership managed to raise enough money did MODEF achieve the level of saturation reached by the FNSEA. The case of the canton of Isle sur la Sorse in the Vaucluse was exceptional in this respect.

Though the MODEF press was, as Grosso puts it, probably the only example of "un journalisme authentiquement paysan", this was due to necessity rather than design.(4) Lack of resources prevented, except in the case of the Landes, the employment of a professional journalist or even a full-time editor which showed in the quality of the finished product. If L'Exploitant Familial allowed farmers to address farmers in their own language (which makes it a more useful source for analyzing MODEF than the FNSEA press is for the study of that organization) it also suffered from the neglect of presentation. The paper was densely packed with articles and information but in a way which was sometimes difficult to assimilate. Furthermore the infrequency with which it appeared prevented it from dealing with specific problems in all their complexity. Though many articles were purely technical accounts of new regulations, the argument was often transferred to a political plane because there was no space to analyze fully the consequences of government action. This infrequency also restricted the political impact of the paper, since it could not be used as a tool of agitation

by responding quickly to events. MODEF's leadership were aware of these problems and began to study ways of publishing the paper more frequently when official recognition in 1981 opened up possibilities of additional finance.

Les Informations Agricoles in the Landes, appearing every week, was by far the most effective of the three papers. Not only was it able to counter FNSEA propaganda but since it appeared weekly and carried most of the local information required by farmers, it dispensed them from reading other agricultural publications. In this way, MODEF was able to take the initiative rather than react to the FNSEA in the Landes.

One of MODEF's major problems was the reluctance of its membership to put its money where its politics were. Over the years many appeals have been made in the pages of L'Exploitant Familial for militants and even entire Federations to collect and, equally importantly, send their subscriptions to the national headquarters.(5) Attempts to raise the membership fee (in 1981 contributions were made according to a sliding scale depending on size of farm but where the maximum was fifty francs) have always been resisted. The national treasurer was probably the most unpopular member of the national leadership through no fault of his own. Simply because of his job, some activists seemed to see him as an enemy. The only heated exchanges at the 1982 Congress came during the debate on the treasurer's report where recalcitrant Federations criticized by the treasurer hit back.

Another financial headache for MODEF was the fact that the main method open to it to demonstrate its representativity was the presentation of candidates in the elections to the Chambers of Agriculture. Unlike other such bodies as the Chambers of Commerce, factory committees and

industrial tribunals the elections to the Chambers of Agriculture are unique in that they are not financed by the state. In all the other professional elections, manifestos and posters are printed and distributed at the state's expense. Given that the amount involved is so small, at least for the government and the FNSEA though not to MODEF, the real explanation for this was the desire to maintain the FNSEA monopoly of representation. As Raymond Mineau put it: "Vous ne voyez pas quand même M.Firino-Martell coller les affiches dans les rues de Cognac".(6) This meant that MODEF was obliged to face a financial crisis every three years, a crisis which sometimes lasted until the next one. For example, even by February 1982, MODEF had not yet liquidated the debts incurred in the 1979 election campaign. This problem alone would justify MODEF's support for the Mauroy government's decision to postpone the elections which should have been held in February 1982.

One of the major functions of farm unions in France has traditionally been the provision of services to their members. Unions were sometimes more like co-operatives than what is normally understood by unionism - i.e. organizations devoted to protecting the general interests of the profession. Even today, in certain regions of France the co-operatives and the unions are virtually indistinguishable, as in the Hérault or the Gard.

In this respect MODEF differs substantially from the FNSEA. The latter has extensive technical and commercial services to provide advice and assistance on almost every aspect of agriculture. These include accountancy schemes and services to deal with the complexities of Value-Added Tax (VAT). Only the Landes was able compete with its FNSEA rival in this respect. Though some Federations such as the Charente



were able to provide a VAT service, the majority of Federations had to rely on their own activists to give advice to the members and supporters on matters which are highly technical. Not only did this involve a limitation on MODEF's effectiveness in its rivalry with the FNSEA, it also affected the way in which the organization was forced to operate. These consequences will be analyzed below.

To some extent this financial and organizational weakness was self-imposed. For a large part of MODEF's existence in the 1960s, its main concern was to challenge the political decisions of government and the EEC rather than to establish the organization as an end in itself. Therefore its recruitment and organization were, in theory, to be based on its political appeal rather than on the material assistance it could provide for its members. Even in 1975, the Constitution adopted by the Conference ruled out the development of profitable commercial activities by the Federations, e.g. the bulk purchase of seeds.(7) Only the Charente-Maritime has violated this prohibition but only on a minor scale.

MODEF bitterly criticized the extent of state finance for the FNSEA. Yet its criticisms neglected the fact that, at least in law, such grants were provided for specific projects rather than for the general aims and objects of the FNSEA. If MODEF had attempted to launch similar kinds of projects, such as new efforts to market the produce of a particular region, MODEF could have obtained more resources or at least placed the government in an embarrassing situation. The government would have had to assist MODEF or reduce its level of assistance to the FNSEA, or have been seen to be distributing public money on political criteria. Given the ingenuity of many MODEF activists in extracting state subsidies when

acting in a personal capacity, it is somewhat surprising that their organization has not been more efficient in manipulating the bureaucracy of agriculture.

There is a dichotomy in the thought of MODEF activists. On the one hand, they are perfectly willing, as individuals, to take the state's money for their own purposes. But as an organization, MODEF has a somewhat puritanical attitude towards the use of state money for more general purposes. In the eyes of MODEF, the extent of financial support extended by the government to the FNSEA, and even more so the CNJA, precludes these organizations from taking an oppositional, or even independent, position.(8) This idea was often reiterated in interviews. One MODEF leader in the Charente, for example, claimed that his doubts about official unionism began when, as a CNJA activist, he was paid what he considered to be over-generous attendance allowances.(9) In fact, an important part of MODEF's self-image is its poverty and the devotion of its leaders and activists, not only expecting no financial compensation for their efforts but indeed having to finance their own activities. Rene Gondran, assistant general secretary, drew a comparison between the vast army of FNSEA officials and the privileges afforded to its leaders and the situation prevailing in MODEF:

Une poignée de dirigeants, les serviettes pleines de dossiers, de rapports, qu'il a fallu établir, étudier, font la navette entre Paris et leur région... Pas en avion comme les dirigeants de la FNSEA, mais en train et en seconde...(10)

This is a sentiment often repeated by MODEF officials. To chase after state finance would detract from the heroic image of the work carried

out by MODEF.

These material weaknesses help to explain the administrative informality of MODEF. Since the apparatus is so weak, there are no clearly defined areas of responsibility and authority for the leaders. Legalistic bureaucratic procedure is not a strong point of the organization. The detailed statutes which exist are more of a moral affirmation of what should be done rather than legally binding rules of procedure.

One aspect of this is that the Constitution contains certain articles which have never been applied. For example, Article Five authorizes the expulsion of Federations who fail to pay their national subscription. This is, of course, a traditional method of political control in agricultural organizations and provided the pretext for the expulsion of the FNSEA Federations who were to create MODEF. Despite the fact that some Federations have been bad payers, Article Five has never been invoked against them. MODEF simply cannot afford to sacrifice its influence in a particular department for the sake of a few thousand francs.

More importantly, as in many organizations, the Constitution does not accurately reflect the relative position of the various levels of the organization's leadership. For example, between Conferences the National Council (Comité Directeur) is the sovereign body of the organization. The Executive Committee (Bureau National) is formally the servant of the former. In practice this relationship is completely the opposite.

A more detailed analysis of the various parts of the national leadership reveals exactly how misleading the formal Constitution is. The role of the National Conference occupies eight out of the forty-two articles in the Constitution and its role in electing the national leadership is described in two others. Article Ten describes the Conference as the "organisme souverain de la Confederation". But at the same time, Article Nine states that the Conference should meet every three years. Its role is therefore limited by the infrequency of its meetings. Similarly, though the Conference is supposed to define policy for the next three years, the amount of time spent on debating resolutions for future activity is limited.(11) At the 1982 Congress only about a quarter of the time available was given over to the debate on future policy. Furthermore, the Constitution provides an elaborate method of organizing the elections involving the presentation of candidates by regional and product groupings present at the Congress. Not only is this method ignored, the following clause of the Constitution negates it by allowing the Conference to adopt "des modalités differentes d'élection qu'apparaîtront nécessaires... à condition qu'elles respectent l'esprit d'unité et la représentation collégiale".(12)

Next in the hierarchy of authority is the National Council (Comite Directeur). Its function is "l'administration et la gestion de la Confederation" (Article Twenty One). To make this more efficient an Executive Committee is elected to take care of business between meetings of the National Council (Article Twenty Seven). But this subordination of the Executive to the Council is entirely illusory. The Council is a large unwieldy body which is difficult to convene. This has been recognized by the modification made to the Constitution in 1978 to reduce the statutory number of annual meetings from four to two. This

obviously increased the autonomy of the Executive. A further modification was made in 1982 to reduce the number of Council members from 120 to seventy-five. The large numbers involved meant that it was almost impossible to assemble the entire Council. Each Conference sees a purge of a certain number of members of the Council because of their bad attendance records. This is not simply due to lack of interest but also to financial constraints. For example, in 1981 a meeting in Paris would cost a delegate from the outlying regions, such as the Bouches-du-Rhône or the Finistère, something in the region of 70 pounds sterling. Not every Federation is able to reimburse its delegates. Indeed, one full-time official admitted that there have been occasions when he had to miss meetings of the leadership simply because there was no money available.

This means that, in practice, the Executive Committee is the real leadership of the organization. Its members meet approximately every four to six weeks and are in constant contact by telephone with the national headquarters. Yet within the Executive, the full-time officials are obviously in a stronger position simply because they have more time to devote to MODEF's affairs. This is particularly clear in the relationship between the Presidents and the general secretary. Since 1978 MODEF has been led by a triumvirate of Raymond Mineau of the Charente, Henry Dofny of the Aude and Pierre Desigors of the Eure. The ostensible reasons for this collective Presidency were administrative. By dividing the country up into three areas, the link between the Federations and the top-level leadership could be strengthened whilst at the same time rationalizing the work of the Presidency. (The political reasons are analyzed in Chapter 7). Though the Constitution enshrines the supremacy of the Presidents - "ils assurent la responsabilité de la

marche de la Confederation" (Article Thirty One) and the secondary role of the general secretary - "Le secrétaire general assiste les Presidents dans la gestion de la Confederation" - the reality is different. The Presidents assist the general secretary. This is not simply due to political conspiracy or personal authority, though it is undeniable that the first holder of the office, Raymond Mineau, certainly conferred a great deal of authority on the post. It would be misleading and insulting to suggest that some members of the leadership can be manipulated by others. It is simply that the general secretary is the only member of the elected leadership who works full-time for the national organization. Of the three Presidents only Raymond Mineau is a full-time official but his responsibilities include running the Charente Federation, presiding over the Poitou-Charentes regional Federation, editing its newspaper and leading the MODEF contingent in the Charente Chamber of Agriculture. The other Presidents have similar responsibilities in MODEF together with the job of running a farm and being heavily involved in political parties. They also experience the problem of distance, being hundreds of miles distant from headquarters in Angoulême. Though the general secretary works as closely with the Presidents as the telephone (sometimes tapped) allows, he is occasionally able to take certain initiatives which do not meet with the wholehearted approval of the Presidents. The most obvious example was Lindenstaedt's attack on the PS in February 1981.(13) In general, however, the members of the Executive complain about excessive consultation rather than the lack of it.(14)

### 3. CO-OPTION AND DEMOCRACY IN MODEF

Decision-making and leadership selection within MODEF depend on a conception of democracy typical of mass organizations in France. A detailed look at the 1982 Conference debates, leadership elections and the internal conduct of MODEF Federations will reveal the characteristics of this system of rationalist democracy and co-option.

At the 1982 Congress, the debates on the reports presented by the leadership involved a wide range of speakers on the problems of various regions and products. Time limits were not strictly enforced, neither did speakers appear to be selected for their docility.(15) Similarly the debate on policy was dominated by the concern to achieve unanimity. Despite a formal procedure for presenting amendments, verbal amendments were accepted during the debate. The majority of these amendments were terminological to remove or create ambiguities in the substantive motion. One cannot accuse the leadership of trying to stifle debate - unless one attributes to them the Machiavellian tactic of allowing debate to be drowned in its own confusion.

Similarly the young farmers' section provided a remarkable example of the overriding desire for unanimity in decision-making. When the results of the National Council's ballot on the election of the Executive were announced at the 1982 Conference, the delegates of the young farmers' section went into emergency session to discuss their response to the reduction in their representation in the Executive. Despite the pressure of time, the debate continued until a position had been agreed in preference to making a quick decision by voting.

This desire for unanimity is a reflection of the perceived need to maintain the unity of the organization at all costs. Conventionally critics have identified unanimity as an absence of democracy. Unanimity is a facade which prevents the rank and file participating in the real debates which are held behind closed doors.(16) This is not, however, the feeling of the rank and file activists of MODEF. As a Bouches-du-Rhône Conference delegate explained - "If the Conference has been properly prepared in the departments, the debate at Congress should really be a formality". Delegates are made aware of the feelings of the membership and are then sent to Paris to speak and vote along those lines. By the time the Conference arrives at the policy debates, the Resolutions Committee should have been able to produce a motion which will secure unanimity. In this perspective Conference is more of a symbolic occasion than a real centre of decision. Its real purpose is to provide a focus for debates, legitimize the leadership and to inspire the activists to further endeavour in the future.

Similarly, the Constitution provides a complicated method of electing the leadership in which the initiative rests with the Federations. According to Article Eighteen, the delegates of each region at the National Conference and the delegates of specialist organizations are supposed to meet to choose candidates to present for election. In practice, there is nothing so formal. Federations simply put forward names which are examined by a Nominations Committee which has no formal status but which is elected by the Conference. But this Committee itself is proposed by the outgoing leadership. A list prepared by the Committee is presented to the Conference and then voted upon by secret ballot. Delegates can only reject the entire list or cross out certain names. They cannot vote for non-approved names. This results in a



system where the leadership is elected virtually unanimously. For example, at the 1982 Conference, out of the 400 delegates, all bar one delegate voted for the list, expressions of dissent being limited to crossing out of the names of certain individuals. Even this type of behaviour was the result of personal grievances rather than more general concerns.

This system can be criticized on the grounds that it effectively means the outgoing leaders co-opt their successors, most of whom will be, of course, themselves. However, the adoption of a formally more democratic system of individual candidatures would present MODEF with serious problems. To begin with, the media blackout from which MODEF has suffered means that very few members of the leadership are known outside their own region. Delegates would therefore tend to support candidates from their own region or alternatively of the same political persuasion. Even with the present system, three south-western regions -Aquitaine, Languedoc-Roussillon and Midi-Pyrénées have nineteen members on the National Committee elected in 1982 compared to the ten representatives of six north-western regions of Nord-Pas de Calais, Haute Normandie, Basse Normandie, Pays de la Loire, Picardie and the Région Parisienne. This obviously reflects the regional implantation of the organization but without this guided democracy, it is likely that the imbalance would be even more acute.

Furthermore, MODEF owes its survival to its concern to maintain an equilibrium between the main political tendencies within the organization.(17) It would be a natural tendency for delegates to vote for candidates of their own political outlook. The consequences of free voting would be a degree of internal politicization which MODEF has

tried to avoid. In a period of conflict within the Left, such free voting would have been particularly damaging to MODEF. One can well imagine what would have happened in 1978. Since it is one of MODEF's main arguments against those who regard it as a front for the PCF that the PCF does not have a majority of the MODEF leadership, it is vital that elections are conducted in such a way as to prevent delegates from expressing political preferences.

A similar situation prevails in the Federations. Few limitations are placed on speakers and meetings sometimes become extremely heated. Neither do departmental leaderships get docile audiences in their meetings. For example, a meeting of the departmental committee of the Vaucluse observed in June 1981 appeared to be extremely anarchic. Members listened to speakers and simultaneously engaged in discussion with other delegates. In the less formal surroundings of the smaller Bouches-du-Rhône Federation committee, members engaged in wide-ranging discussions with varying views being exchanged. However, rather than seeking a clear-cut decision one way or another, the normal procedure was to blur any differences by accepting potentially contradictory views as equally valid.

Similarly the need to maintain a political and geographical equilibrium is also visible in the Federations. Within a department geographical differences usually also cover differences in types of agriculture and produce. For example, in the Charente in 1981, a MRG President from the centre of the department in the cognac-producing zone was matched by a PCF general secretary from the south of the department in a polycultural zone. An MRG vice-president was matched by a PCF treasurer and PS Executive members. In the Vaucluse the concern for political balance

has been even greater, given the more intense competition within the Left in Provence in general, and the Vaucluse in particular. The leading members of the Federation include a PCF President and PS vice-president from the centre of the department, a PCF assistant secretary from the eastern extremity of the department with non-aligned vice-presidents from the southern and western ends of the department.

The search for unanimity is a practice which exists at all levels of the organization. Indeed it is enshrined in the Constitution. Article Twenty Eight obliges leaders to search for unanimity. "Le Comité Directeur et le Bureau devront, avant tout vote, rechercher les solutions pouvant exprimer l'opinion unanime de l'organisation dans l'esprit d'unité". That this is not purely illusory is proved by the fact that voting in the Executive is extremely rare. One member interviewed pointed out that the disputes over the 1981 elections were the first problems not to be decided unanimously since his election to the leadership in the early 1970s. However, this unanimity is based on the assumption that reason and common interest will prevail. Once a problem is properly analyzed, only those with interests divergent from those of the mass of small and medium farmers can disagree.(18) What really happens usually is that differences are masked and unanimity equals confusion. It is this mode of operation which accounts for some of the contradictions analyzed in the chapter on MODEF ideology.

However, in the six months after May 1981 more decisions had to be made. Due to the tradition of non-conflictual debates, some of the changes which took place were masked and some activists had not yet realized the consequences. There was a risk of a backlash from certain sections of the organization when some socialist proposals accepted by MODEF would

be put into practice. This was particularly the case for income tax reform and the product boards.

#### 4. THE LANDES FEDERATION

To the extent that one can talk of a dominant group within the MODEF leadership it is the Landes Federation representatives. Not only is the Landes the most powerful Federation, it has also been the traditional source of innovation within MODEF, as the example of the young farmers' organization, the Federation Nationale des Jeunes de MODEF (FNJ), described below shows.

The Landes has traditionally played a major role in the leadership of MODEF. The Federation leaders have usually occupied leading roles in the National Executive. Of the Executive elected in 1982, four members were officials of the Landes Federation, including the national treasurer, Franck Marcade. Only one other department, the Drôme, had more than one representative in the Executive. Similarly the Landes, with five seats, was the department with most representatives on the National Council. (This did not include FNJ representatives from the Landes.)

This prominent position stems from the Federation's local successes. Not only have its successes given it greater stature within MODEF but the fact that it has managed to create an administrative apparatus worthy of a FNSEA Federation means that its leaders have material support which other Federations lack. In terms of finance, expert

advice, and even on the most basic level of secretarial support, its leaders are extremely privileged by comparison to their colleagues in other departments. Indeed, it is somewhat surprising that the Landes has not played an even greater role in MODEF affairs, particularly since its innovation has sometimes been frustrated by the conservatism of the rest of the organization.

However, rather than provoke resentment against its prominent position, the Landes Federation was usually criticized for its refusal to take even more responsibility within the organization. Given the resources of the Federation it was argued that it should take some of the burden off the shoulders of national officials by taking administrative responsibility for the regions of Aquitaine and Midi-Pyrénées. The Landes Federation categorically refused to do so, not merely through lack of ambition or energy but because it believed that its members would resent paying subscriptions to subsidize other farmers. Furthermore, to extend its activities outside the confines of the department would, it believed, jeopardize the grants received from Landes bodies such as the Conseil Général. Even more importantly, to neglect the interests of the Landes in favour of other south-western departments would endanger its strong position in the Landes and the resources which allow it to make its distinctive contribution to the national leadership.

## 5. REGIONAL ORGANIZATION

Apart from the problems created by the geographical distribution of its members, MODEF has given more and more attention to the economic and demographic diversity of its membership. It has realized that the description "petit et moyen exploitant" in fact disguises a multitude of differences.

The reluctance of the Landes to accept responsibilities is indicative of the problems which MODEF has experienced in linking national and local concerns. In an effort to strengthen the apparatus and the link between the Federations and national headquarters, some regional Federations have been set up. For example, in March 1981, the MODEF Federations of Loir-et-Cher, Loiret, Cher, Eure-et-Loir and Indre-et-Loire set up the regional Federation for the Centre in order to "aider au développement de notre syndicat, de coordonner ses actions, et de lui permettre de s'exprimer sur le plan régional".(19) However, these regional organizations have a limited role with no authority over the Federations. The Poitou-Charentes region with a longstanding regional organization publishing its own newspaper is exceptional. Apart from this region, only Provence and Brittany had full-time officials with responsibility for the entire region. But even in these cases, the full-timers were expected to devote the greater part of their time and efforts to the dominant Federation - the Charente in Poitou-Charentes, the Vaucluse in Provence and the Côtes-du-Nord in Brittany. Given these constraints, regional organization has been confined to irregular meetings between Federation leaders to discuss specific problems as they arise. In this light, the weakness of MODEF implantation within a region is not simply based on differences in types of agriculture and local class structure. It can also be seen to be related to relative

proximity to the leading Federation and to the regional headquarters. For instance, in Provence MODEF is strongest in the Vaucluse and the border areas of the southern Drôme, western Alpes de Haute Provence and northern Bouches-du-Rhône. MODEF's position in the south of the Vienne, the north of the Gironde and the east of the Charente-Maritime as well as in eastern Finistère and western Ile-et-Vilaine confirm the importance of organizational resources.

But why has MODEF neglected regional organization so much? To some extent, MODEF's lack of interest in the region is typical of the problems which the regions have had to face. As various writers have pointed out, many of the regions are arbitrary administrative creations corresponding neither to historical borders nor to present-day economic zones. Since they are artificial, there is little popular regional consciousness. Furthermore, since Eckstein it has been taken for granted that pressure groups are moulded by the institutional environment in which they operate.(21) But for MODEF almost all the institutions with which it is concerned, the FDSEA, the Credit Agricole, the Conseil Général and the various official committees, are organized on a departmental basis. Indeed, since one of the main ways in which MODEF demonstrates its legitimacy and representative status is through participation in professional elections to the departmental Chambers of Agriculture, it is hardly surprising that the departmental Federation should be the fundamental unit of MODEF organization. More explicitly political concerns underlying this lack of interest in the region are discussed in Chapter 8

## 6. THE SPECIALIST ORGANIZATIONS

Since 1975, MODEF has been formally a Confederation of departmental Federations and specialist organizations. These specialist organizations are of two main types, those concerned with particular products and those concerned with particular categories of the agricultural population. Of the former the main ones are the Association Nationale des Petits et Moyens Producteurs de Céréales, Oléagineux et Betteraves (ANPMPC) and the Association Nationale des Petits et Moyens Producteurs de Fruits et de Légumes (ANPMPEL). The latter are the Association Nationale des Anciens Exploitants (ANAE), the Section Nationale des Fermiers et Métayers (SNFM) and the most important, the Federation Nationale des Jeunes du MODEF (FNJ). The latter is analyzed separately. There is also an organization which combines the two concerns by organizing the producers of a specific product in a particular region - the Comité de Défense de la Viticulture Charentaise. Three motives have dictated this process of bureaucratic inbreeding. The official explanation is that specialist organizations are needed to develop detailed policies since Annual General Meetings (AGMs), Conferences and the National Council do not have the time nor the knowledge to monitor developments and form policy on every issue. More importantly, the specialist organizations are designed to compete with the panoply of FNSEA-affiliated producer groups.(22) For example, the cereals association is designed to undermine the monopoly of the Association Générale des Producteurs du Blé (AGPB), an organization dominated by northern capitalist agriculture and extremely influential within the FNSEA. One of its activities was a campaign to prevent the co-operatives from automatically paying subscriptions for their members to the AGPB.(23) Most important of all, the creation of such organizations reflects the widespread apathy of farmers for the problems



of other farmers. The specialist organizations are in a better position to appeal to the pockets rather than to the politics of potential supporters. Recognizing the need for constructive proposals as well as global denunciations, MODEF's specialist organizations are an attempt to avoid the political overtones of the organization as a whole.

In theory the specialist organizations are autonomous, linked to the Confederation by the purely formal means of affiliation. In practice they are inseparable from MODEF. The membership and leadership of these organizations are virtually the same as those of MODEF. That is to say that the membership of the specialist organizations is essentially comprised of members of MODEF eligible for membership of the organization in question.

MODEF also has a number of specialist committees such as the Wine Committee (Commission Nationale Viticole) and the Women's Committee (Commission Feminine) which are theoretically distinguished from specialist organizations by the fact that they do not have any autonomy. But in practice, the specialist organizations are little more than specialist committees. This is shown not only by their overlapping personnel but also by their passivity within MODEF. For example, Article Eighteen of the constitution allows these organizations to nominate candidates for election to the national leadership. However, at the 1982 Conference, only the FNJ did so. Leaders are elected because of their departmental and national work for MODEF, not because they are the leaders of particular categories of farmers. Furthermore, despite the fact that these organizations may have separate membership cards and subscriptions, they do not have their own administrative personnel or newspaper. They must rely on L'Exploitant Familial. This

lack of resources means that these organizations are effectively limited to detailed study of particular problems and the elaboration of detailed proposals.

There are material and ideological inhibitions on the development of these organizations. Most obviously, MODEF just does not have the financial and administrative resources or a sufficiently large clientele to sustain such organizations. On the other hand, MODEF's own ideology militates against sectionalism. Since the vast majority of MODEF activists see their problems as resulting from political decisions and the role of the state in promoting the development of capitalist agriculture, technical questions seem secondary to them. The official boycott of MODEF by the state until 1981 both forced them into and confirmed them in such an attitude. Finally, even though MODEF accepted the reality of the fragmentation of interests amongst small and medium-scale farmers, there is still a reluctance to encourage such sectionalism. For MODEF, all small and medium-scale farmers, whatever their region or product, have an overriding common interest. MODEF's role is to make them aware of this. Sectional organization is therefore a threat to MODEF's aims.(24)

Two groups of the agricultural population deserve particular attention, women and young farmers. Traditionally, women were more or less excluded from agricultural organizations. Since such organizations were based on the concept of family representation, the head of the household participated on behalf of his entire family.(25) MODEF was no exception to this rule. In recent years, MODEF has attempted to involve women in its activity. A Women's Committee was created to further this aim. This policy has largely been the work of MODEF's present general

secretary, Frederic Lindenstaedt, who has made constant appeals to the Federations to involve farmers' wives in MODEF. This is not purely the result of an ideological commitment but also reflects a supremely practical concern. Given the decline of the farming population, it is an expensive luxury for any farming organization to forego the potential support of the female part of the agricultural population. This attitude is not confined to ritual appeals. Women are actively encouraged to participate at all levels. Women are over-represented in the leadership compared to their presence in the Federations. For example, at the 1982 Conference one in ten of the delegates was female. Even this was a higher proportion than the situation in the Federations would suggest. But the proportion increases to one in eight in the National Committee and to one in seven in the Executive Committee.(26) This is, of course, yet another example of the process of co-option.

However, progress remains limited. The Women's Committee has an extremely shadowy existence, meeting infrequently and with virtually no organization in the Federations (except the Landes and the Var).(27) According to those involved the main problem is a total lack of interest on the part of the farmers' wives for involvement in any kind of organization. Women are blamed as much for their passivity as men for their conservatism. A further problem is that many farmers' wives have outside occupations and may have little interest in agriculture.(28)

The main problem is that the attempt to encourage women to participate by allocating top-level positions to women activists is self-defeating. The leaders of the Women's Committee have departmental and national responsibilities which prevent them from dedicating themselves to the organization of women and eventually changing the sex composition of

MODEF in the long run. For instance, the president of the Committee was already fully occupied by the tasks of vice-president of the Confederation and general of the Calvados Federation. These material are compounded by the traditional attitude amongst women activists on the Left, and particularly in the PCF, that separate organizations for women are a capitulation to the bourgeois idea that the fundamental political division is sex rather than class. "Nous ne voulons pas mettre les femmes d'un coté et les hommes de l'autre."(29)

#### 7. THE FEDERATION NATIONALE DES JEUNES DU MODEF

The FNJ is the most developed and autonomous of MODEF's specialist organizations. It is also the one which has provoked the most controversy. When the idea was first advanced by Franck Marcade, one of the younger leaders of the Landes Federation, in 1964 he was denounced bitterly as a splitter.(30) It was felt that the organization had enough problems without creating divisions within it. Several other reasons which were not made explicit help to account for this hostility. Firstly, the example of the CNJA and its role in undermining the traditional rightist leadership of the FNSEA and as an ally of the government was still fresh in people's minds. Youth was associated with a modernizing rhetoric which really covered up a commitment to the capitalist transformation of agriculture. Secondly, many of the leaders of MODEF were themselves relatively young and did not feel that MODEF neglected the interests of young farmers. At the time of MODEF's foundation, its general secretary was only thirty-seven years old. Many other Federations were led by even more youthful activists. For example,

in the Vaucluse the leading militants were in their late twenties or early thirties. On the other hand, the older leaders were not favourable to the prospect of a diminishing influence over younger farmers. Finally, the problems which the PCF had encountered with its youth section in the 1960s created suspicion in the minds of PCF members in MODEF.

Eventually the necessity for a separate young farmers' organization made itself clear to all but the most recalcitrant elements of the leadership. Encouraged by the success of the pioneering efforts of the Landes Federation, the FNJ was set up in 1972. This step resulted from a number of factors. Firstly, there was the growing realization that MODEF was no longer acting as a pressure group on the FNSEA and hoping that the policy and leadership of the FNSEA would change in a direction more acceptable to MODEF. MODEF itself was here to stay and would have to itself to become a fully fledged union, which it did 1975. At the same time the diminishing prospect of the kind of political change which would make MODEF superfluous after the debacle of 1968-69 impressed the need upon the leadership to prepare for the long-term future. The organization was now seen as a necessary means to an end, not simply one tactic among many.

Therefore there was a clear need to prepare future leaders to carry on the struggle after the first generation leaders had retired. Indeed by the early seventies many of the older members of this first generation were in need of replacement. In order to achieve this, the CNJA's monopoly of recruitment of young farmers had to be challenged. Since there were substantial differences in style between the CNJA and the FNSEA, one had to adopt different approaches depending on with which

organization one was competing. Since such different styles could create tensions within MODEF, it was necessary for external (competition with the CNJA) and internal (maintaining unity) purposes that young farmers should be segregated from the wider organization.

Both MODEF and FNJ deny that there is any conflict of interest between young and old farmers. Such differences as exist are the result of the fact that young farmers have problems which are specific to them and that they have an entirely different political experience. Young farmers, for instance, face the problem of setting up in business for the first time with the associated difficulties of finding and then purchasing or renting land and equipment. Similarly young farmers are more likely to have more dealings with the Credit Agricole and with the various technical agencies responsible for monitoring their progress if they have presented a Development Plan - necessary to obtain the grants and cheaper loans which often make the difference between success or failure.

In political terms, as a leading MODEF official explained, the differences result from the fact that the older farmers have had to fight more wide-ranging and politicized battles.(31) Instead of fighting for modification of a law or resisting a ministerial order, the older men have had the experience of fighting for the establishment of an entirely new law, e.g. the Statut du Fermage et du Métayage. On the other hand, young farmers have much greater technical and economic knowledge than their fathers. The result is that one has to approach young farmers, of whatever political tendency, in a much less politicized way. "Il faut leur parler technique."(32) The attempt to combine the two approaches would lead to incomprehension.

Finally, there was probably an ulterior motive behind the realization that the CNJA had to be combatted directly rather than just regarded as a satellite of the FNSEA. Since the late 1960s and early 1970s was a period of intense political conflict within the CNJA, it became less and less realistic to denounce the CNJA in such terms. Whilst the official line of the CNJA was in direct opposition to MODEF policy, the left-wing opposition within the CNJA was more dangerous to MODEF. One should remember that this opposition came within a few votes of becoming a majority at the 1970 Blois Conference.(33) This opposition, which developed into the Paysan Travailleux tendency, appeared to threaten not only the CNJA/FNSEA monopoly of state recognition and their collaborationist policies but also undermined MODEF's virtual monopoly of opposition. The FNJ was necessary to undermine the Paysan Travailleux tendency just as much as it was needed to combat the CNJA.

As an autonomous organization, the FNJ is far more developed than any other specialist organization within MODEF. Yet its strength remains limited. On the one hand, it has its own finances and the more organized Federations were, even before 1981, able to obtain grants from local institutions, such as the Credit Agricole or the Conseil Général, which MODEF Federations could not get, on the grounds of vocational training, cultural improvement, etc. On the other hand, the overall financial position of the FNJ is extremely precarious. The Federations with money keep it to themselves whilst many others failed to capitalize on the opportunities to obtain such grants. Secondly, until December 1981 the FNJ had its own full-time general secretary, Guy Berthomier. The importance of this official in preserving the identity of the FNJ was not fully recognized until his resignation. His personalized style of administration was highly successful for the organization but at the

same time camouflaged its weaknesses. With his departure the financial and administrative weaknesses were exposed. Finally, there is the question of the autonomy of the FNJ. The FNJ has its own elected leadership elected by its own national Conference. Its members are chosen on the grounds of their activity in the FNJ rather than in the Confederation. Young farmers elected to the MODEF leadership on regional lists are not considered representatives of the FNJ, and indeed are regarded with some suspicion by FNJ activists. However the question of the relationship between MODEF and the FNJ is the greatest source of controversy within the Confederation, outweighing any conflicts inspired by political divisions. The resignation of the FNJ general secretary was a symptom of an underlying malaise. There is a contradiction between the existence of the FNJ as an autonomous organization and its role as an integral part of MODEF. This is accentuated by the administrative informality of the organization. Decisions are likely to be taken by one official which, strictly speaking, are the province of another. In practice the autonomy of the FNJ is jeopardized.

The basic problem is that the number of effective FNJ Federations is inadequate to support a separate administration. As Berthomier's successor as FNJ general secretary admitted, the FNJ could not exist without MODEF.(34) Even though the idea of the FNJ has been accepted, there are many departments where the idea of a young farmers' Federation does not arouse enthusiasm. The FNJ claims to exist in twenty-four departments but only in eight, the Charente, Charente-Maritime, Côtes-du-Nord, Drôme, Finistère, Gers, Tarn-et-Garonne and of course the Landes, does the FNJ have an effective separate existence. In some departments the absence of the FNJ is the result of the absence of any significant numbers of young farmers. Other Federations are too small to



maintain two separate organizations in the department. On the other hand, many Federations have made little effort to organize a FNJ Federation. In the worst cases, some Federations appear to have done everything they can to prevent the emergence of a young farmers' Federation by co-opting any potential leaders of such a Federation into the departmental hierarchy of the MODEF Federation. The Vaucluse is a noted example of this type of MODEF Federation. Although this is sometimes regarded as deliberate sabotage, the more probable explanation of this behaviour is that it reflects a short-sighted view of the role of the FNJ.(35) Since the FNJ is designed to supply a new generation of leaders, rather than allowing young leaders to carry on the work of organizing the FNJ until they reach the age limit of thirty-five, the MODEF Federation snatches them as soon as possible. But since this kind of cradle snatching cannot take place without the consent of the victim, this demonstrates that not even young farmers are entirely convinced of the need for the FNJ. However, one would expect that MODEF leaders, as farmers, would realize that harvesting the crop before it is ripe is likely to have disastrous consequences.

It is true that certain militants were aware of the possibility of such problems arising and argued, at the foundation of the FNJ, that it should not be part of MODEF itself but should work with MODEF as an independent ally. Agreement would be negotiated on specific issues rather than being taken for granted. This position was rejected on both political and practical grounds. The lack of resources made total independence impractical. It is a view which has usually been expressed as a result of anger at a particular MODEF decision but which has been rejected by even the most critical elements of the FNJ leadership.(36)

Paradoxically, the FNJ pursuit of greater autonomy has been based on a strategy of seeking greater representation within MODEF on the assumption that having greater responsibility within MODEF would mean greater possibilities of bartering with the autonomy of the FNJ. The danger in such a strategy is that the FNJ leaders are prematurely drawn into devoting more and more time to MODEF business, thus cutting the head off the organization, and leading to the FNJ repeating, at the national level, the failures apparent in the departments. The leaders find themselves in a dilemma, whether to represent MODEF in the FNJ or the FNJ in MODEF.

The limited success of the FNJ presents a serious problem for the future of MODEF. The young men who created MODEF are, in many cases, coming to the end of their careers. The problem is particularly acute when one looks at the full-time officials of MODEF. To judge by the 1982 Conference, MODEF has sufficient replacements for the lay members of the national leadership. The real problem is at the extremes of the pyramid. Replacing the full-time officials will be extremely difficult since all elected officials of MODEF must be farmers themselves. Given the problems involved in entering into the profession, those involved are likely to be extremely dedicated to farming and will not be easily persuaded to effectively give up farming in the interests of the organization. The other problem is the replacement of departmental leaders in those Federations which have neglected or obstructed the development of the FNJ and the training of future leaders. This accounts for all but the handful of MODEF Federations named above. Of these, the Landes is in the most comfortable position being able to simultaneously maintain a viable FNJ Federation and place young activists in positions of responsibility. For example, the MODEF President of the Mutualite Sociale Agricole of the Landes (MSA) elected

in 1981, Michel Barrouilhet, was the youngest man to hold this office in the country.

In the short term, MODEF can continue to neglect the problem. Indeed for most of the 1980s, placing younger militants in positions of responsibility will involve sacrificing present certainties for future risks. Put another way, ageing is simply a reflection of continuity. In the early 1980s MODEF had a highly experienced and in many cases respected national and departmental leadership. For example, Raymond Mineau's role in the world of Charente and French agricultural unionism began in 1947. Similarly though Frederic Lindenstaedt's role in the MODEF leadership began in 1973, he first came to attention as secretary of the Tenant's Section of the Lot-et-Garonne FDSEA in the 1950s. Similarly in the departments, there are many leaders whose active role in agricultural affairs began in the 1940s. In many cases the present leaders of MODEF Federations are the men who led the organizations into, or created, MODEF in 1959-60. For example, in 1982, the Presidents of the Federations of the Landes, Vaucluse, Corrèze and Charente-Maritime had been intimately involved in their Federations since the beginning. The rejuvenation of MODEF in the 1980s involves replacing men who have attained a quasi-notable status with younger, less and less well-known men - a development which has obvious risks which restrict the enthusiasm for change.

## 8. MODEF AS CAMPAIGNER

This section is concerned with the forms which MODEF's campaigning activity has taken and the reasons for these forms. It will be shown that MODEF concentrated on political targets and that it effectively abandoned the representation of the short-term economic interests of agriculture to the FNSEA. This reflects both the material constraints upon MODEF and the ideology of the organization.

MODEF's protest activity is well documented by its own press, and to a lesser extent, by the regional press. An examination of the MODEF press and the regional dailies, La Marseillaise and La Charente Libre, for the period January-September 1981 shows the following incidents. The year began with a group of MODEF demonstrators surprising the Minister of Agriculture, Pierre Mehaignerie, in his mayoral office in Vitré (Ile-et-Vilaine) and forcing him to engage in a dialogue with MODEF leaders that he had hitherto refused. Later that month the MODEF Federations of the Charente and Charente-Maritime demonstrated against increased duties placed upon pineau and cognac (the staple industries of the region) by the government.(37) In February, the Landes Federation demonstrated against the prohibition of the BACO hybrid vine by the government.(38) In March, the south-western Federations joined together in Auch to protest against the extension of the EEC.(39) Further north, the Sarthe Federation demonstrated against a court decision to expel a tenant farmer from his farm. One of MODEF's rare protests against an economic target occurred in the Côtes-du-Nord where the Federation demonstrated against a dairy which had discontinued its collection from one of the Federation's members. In Angoulême, the Federation organized a direct sale, in conjunction with the Confédération Générale du Travail

(CGT), to the workforce of an armaments factory in the suburbs. This was followed by a demonstration outside the MSA and the Prefecture over social security contributions.(40) In April the Landes Federation participated in a demonstration organized by machinery co-operatives against the government's alleged discrimination against co-operatives.(41) Then came the elections and a period of truce until July when the fruit, vegetable and wine growers of the Midi erupted on to the scene.

The Federations of the Bouches-du-Rhône and the Vaucluse were involved in a demonstration at the Chateaurenard market and the subsequent invasion of the Tarascon tax office.(41) MODEF activists from the Hérault were also involved in the most spectacular of the summer's protests, a protest which finally forced the government to act - the storming of a Greek tanker and the destruction of its cargo of 8,750 hectolitres of Italian wine.(42) Throughout the summer the MODEF Federations of the Aude, Hérault, Gard, Bouches-du-Rhône and Vaucluse participated in the checks made on foreign lorries for potential imports of wine, vegetables and fruit.(43)

The wide variety of grievances which this activity reveals is a serious problem for MODEF.(44) It reflects the attitude which dominates most farmers' concerns. Increasing specialization and the diminishing agricultural population means that mobilization of farmers is much more difficult now than in the past. The minimum viable region for a demonstration has passed from the canton to at least half a department.(45) Many farmers display a total lack of interest in the problems of products other than their own. Even when they do show some

interest, their opinions may differ. For example, whilst the MODEF leader responsible for the wine sector claims that there is no need whatever for Italian imports, many MODEF activists in the AOC Côtes du Rhône zone of the Vaucluse believe that such imports are necessary in order to strengthen the low alcoholic content vins de table of the Hérault and the Aude.(46) This lack of solidarity reduces the potential number of participants in particular manifestations of protest whilst at the same time reducing the possibility of organizing action on more general grievances.

Another important feature of these activities is that in the vast majority of cases the action was peaceful. This is almost a principle rather than a tactic with MODEF. For example whilst MODEF participates in motorway road blocks in order to stop lorries carrying imported goods and to destroy their cargo, it rejects the use of unnecessary violence such as the burning of lorries or the beating of drivers. Mineau summed up the MODEF attitude towards the use of force in an interview with La Nouvelle Critique in 1972.(47) Basically MODEF is "contre ces actions de dégradations et autres qui se retournent contre nous en fin de compte". On the one hand, farmers themselves may be the victims of violent actions:

Nous n'irons pas scier les poteaux téléphoniques, parce que nous avons davantage le sens paysan que certain gauchistes qu'sont parfois manoeuvrés. En effet, scier des poteaux téléphoniques, c'est bien joli, mais c'est isoler un village qu'est peut-être à deux kilomètres de là.

More importantly, ill-considered violence can alienate the urban population whose support the farmers need. "Nous cherchons en tout cas à ne pas faire supporter à l'exécutant la responsabilité de ceux qui ordonnent, c'est-à-dire le gouvernement, le pouvoir, les grands capitalistes et les grands agrariens..." For example, attacks on railwaymen are condemned because "ils nous coupent de la masse des travailleurs et nous perdons de notre force dans la bataille". In this respect, MODEF's views are indistinguishable from those of the PCF or the CGT. MODEF leaders are proud of their relative success in taming the unruly instincts which have caused so many farmers' demonstrations to end in violence. After MODEF's first demonstration in Brussels in February, 1982, MODEF leaders commended their members for their behaviour. According to MODEF, the Belgian riot police were surprised to find French farmers in Brussels who had not come looking for a fight, unlike the annual FNSEA protests in the city. Similarly road blocks are designed to guarantee safety for both demonstrators and motorists and are timed to disrupt economic rather than social life. Road blocks are set up at a time when they delay people going to work rather than on their way home or in their spare time. For example, the action of the CDJA of Alpes de Haute Provence in setting up road blocks on a Sunday afternoon was bitterly denounced by the MODEF Federation.(48) As far as MODEF was concerned, such an action could only serve the interests of the Right. Another important criteria for MODEF was that protest actions should involve as many farmers as possible rather than be restricted to small "commandos". Such actions create a sensation rather than enlightenment.(49) They permit the media to concentrate on the protest itself rather than on the grievances of the protestors. The different styles of MODEF and the FNSEA in this respect was demonstrated clearly in their reactions to the crisis on the fruit and vegetables markets in

the summer of 1981. Whilst MODEF in the Bouches-du-Rhône organized direct sales in working class estates in Marseilles with the assistance of the CGT, the Vaucluse FDSEA organized a commando raid in Avignon. At the height of the Theatre Festival, fifteen trucks arrived in the city centre, discharged their loads of fruit and vegetables in front of the Town Hall and promptly disappeared without the slightest explanation. Dumbfounded tourists were only brought to their senses by the outbreak of a mini-riot after tomatoes and pears were thrown at the police in which the author's political education was completed by a dose of tear gas.

The one exception to this rejection of "commando" protest was part of MODEF's campaign for official recognition. The surprise visit to Pierre Mehaignerie was only the most spectacular of a series of similar events. Raymond Barre was also caught by surprise in a visit to the Vaucluse in 1978.(50) Though this involves a certain amount of intimidation, it cannot be regarded in the same light as the treatment which FNSEA activists accorded to socialist ministers after May 1981, particularly to the Minister of Agriculture in February 1982.

MODEF has also had some influence in preventing the kind of anti-trade union protest which FNSEA leaders have been only too willing to countenance, or indeed organize. As MODEF points out, agricultural organization has traditionally been hostile to the labour movement and many MODEF activists would regard political neutralization of farmers as a victory, let alone winning them over to the Left.(51) Unlike a leader such as Alexis Gourvennec, one of the angry young men of the CNJA in the early 1960s, who responded to a CGT strike at the port of Roscoff by organizing a gang of farmers to smash the picket line, MODEF sees such



actions as ineffective in the short-term and politically damaging for the farmers' cause in the long-term.(52) However this attitude is not simply a reflection of the political affiliations of MODEF leaders and activists but also due to a more general conception that protest should be aimed against those responsible for the problems of farmers rather than their powerless subordinates.

Finally, despite MODEF's reluctance to get involved in violence, it should not be assumed that it is a pacifist organization. It is simply that it does not wish to incite violence but it will not run away from a fight. As Mineau pointed out to La Nouvelle Critique, MODEF would consider itself justified to involve itself in:

toute action contre l'éviction de familles de métayers avec des méthodes musclées, des méthodes vigoureuses, pour empêcher la spéculation, pour s'opposer à l'achat des terres en faussant les enchères.

Later in the interview Mineau defended the farmers who fought pitched battles with the CRS in the towns of the Midi in February 1971 since, he argues, they were only protecting themselves against police brutality.(53)

As we have seen, MODEF concentrated on political targets - on prefects, government departments and ministers. Even in clear-cut cases where private enterprise was the guilty party, MODEF preferred to pressurize the state to force private concerns to conform to the law or to adopt a more reasonable policy rather than to directly confront private

enterprise. Both the Charente and the Vaucluse provide perfect examples of this tendency. For example, in the Charente, MODEF was faced with the problem of the persistent violation of the agreement drawn up by the Bureau National Inter-Professionnel du Cognac (BNIC) and given legally binding status by the government.(54) Rather than address itself to the cognac merchants, or to the famous firm considered to be the worst offender, MODEF protested to the BNIC and in particular to the government representative within the BNIC. Similarly faced with a disastrous collapse of prices, MODEF in the Vaucluse and Bouches-du-Rhône reacted by appealing to the state and invading government premises. The local or regional offices of the firms responsible for foreign imports, alleged to be the source of the problem, were left untroubled. This behaviour is one of the FNSEA's major criticisms of MODEF - that it was concerned only to embarrass the government, not to resolve the problems of farmers by giving them a greater place in the economic institutions of agriculture and agro-industry. For example, one of MODEF's leading adversaries in the Charente claims that in a dispute between farmers and a dairy firm, MODEF protested against the government despite the fact that the prefect was actively involved in supporting the farmers against the firm.(55)

Apart from the temptation to attack the government for political reasons, there were several material and ideological reasons for such a strategy. In the first place, the administrative weakness of MODEF encouraged the politicization of economic issues. Given that there was no research department within the organization, analysis of new political and economic developments and new legislation had to be carried out by an already hard-pressed leadership. Given the lack of

time and resources there was a natural tendency to cut corners by substituting a global political critique for a concrete analysis of advantages and disadvantages. But without such detailed knowledge it is extremely difficult to fight economic battles. Secondly, there is the problem of sectionalism. On the one hand, agro-alimentary industry is so dispersed into relatively small firms operating in specific product markets in specific regions that a strategy for a national economic conflict would be extremely difficult to elaborate.(56) The sectionalism of the industrialists only reinforces the sectionalism of the farmers. Since each product has its own problems with different firms, it would be even more difficult than it already is to unite the entire organization on certain demands. As will be seen in Chapter 6, this helps explain the emphasis which MODEF has placed on the one issue which concerns all farmers - social security contributions.

The traditional tendency to hold the state responsible for "la pluie et le beau temps" must also be considered. This is considered in more detail in Chapter 5. There is a long and respectable tradition of criticizing the government for everything.(57) This should not be regarded as irrational or backward but nevertheless represents an abdication of responsibility which has permitted French political culture to be characterized by the cynical remark - "le coeur à gauche, la portefeuille à droite". The other side of the coin is that governments have behaved as if "la pluie et le beau temps" was their responsibility. The existence of the prefect as a sort of local head of state and the arrogance of the administration in general has also contributed to the popular view which sees them as the root of all injustice.

A further reason for concentrating on political rather than economic targets is that whilst government and administration are seen as remote and technocratic, the same is not true of the firms involved in supplying goods to and purchasing goods from agriculture. On the one hand, many of these firms are co-operatives in which farmers themselves are the shareholders. Since these organizations are controlled by the farmers themselves, or at least their leaders, there are great inhibitions on demonstrating against them.(58) Similarly the small-scale nature of many of the firms in the industry means that there is often a large amount of face-to-face contact with industrialists and merchants which inhibits protest. Economic elites exercise a more direct influence on farmers than do political elites. Even in MODEF there is widespread acceptance of the idea that the interests of the small and medium firms converge with those of the farmers themselves. This is particularly the case in Provence where the decline in the number of farmers has been paralleled by a decline in the numbers of local firms purchasing at the local markets.(59)

On the other hand, this direct relationship also means that economic elites have a more direct capacity for retaliation than political elites. Though deaths and serious injuries have taken place, in general those who demonstrate against political institutions risk little more than a breath of tear-gas. But to do so against the firms involved in the industry can result in the effective loss of one's livelihood. Such firms can retaliate by refusing to purchase one's produce.

A particularly interesting example is the fruit and vegetable market at Chateaurenard in the Bouches-du-Rhône. To the outsider, this market, the largest of its kind in Europe, is totally anarchical. Hundreds of farmers arrive from the Vaucluse, Gard, Ardèche, Drôme and Bouches-du-Rhône between six and seven a.m. each morning. Their produce is displayed over an area of 200 acres whilst the agents of the merchants patrol the grounds, picking out merchandise which suits their requirements. After a brief haggle, the farmer takes his goods to the merchant's depot or awaits the next offer. It would appear that the farmer is in a position of complete uncertainty. In reality, the chaos is reduced by the fact that there are often longstanding links between individual farmers and buyers which mean that particular farmers get privileged treatment from particular buyers. The farmers of the commune of Chateaurenard itself benefit most of all from such arrangements.

The other side of the coin is that the farmer is placed in a state of personal dependency upon the buyers. In order to maintain his privileged situation, the farmer is necessarily hindered in doing anything to create a more organized market since to do so would be to disrupt the informal relationships. This is one of the main reasons why Chateaurenard has traditionally been a right-wing oasis in a leftist desert, known locally as the "Vendée provençale".(60)

MODEF's tendency to politicize issues is also a reflection of the political options of its leaders and activists. This does not mean simply that they wished to attack right-wing governments and draw their supporters towards the parties of the Left, there are also less direct ideological considerations involved. On the one hand, MODEF, along with the parties of the Left, has been permeated by a certain conception of

the capitalist state. The theory of monopoly state capitalism is only a more sophisticated version of the concepts of "le mur d'argent" and "les 200 familles" prevalent in the inter-war period.(61) This theory undermines the distinction between politics and economics. The state and capital are becoming increasingly interlinked whilst capital itself is constantly being concentrated in fewer and fewer firms. The state is therefore the representative of an ever-diminishing group, the owners and managers of large-scale capital. The lesson which is often drawn in practice is that the state is responsible for capitalism, rather than capitalism being responsible for the state. A further consequence of this instrumentalist form of vulgar Marxism is that individuals and groups are seen as prisoners of their socio-economic positions. It is therefore regarded as a waste of time to attempt to challenge the agents of economic organizations since they are only doing what the laws of capitalism oblige them to do.

At the same time, there is the syndicalist tradition of twentieth century popular organizations. This "apolitical" syndicalism defined by the Amiens Charter of the CGT formally excluding political considerations from professional organization has meant the opposite in practice. The formal refusal to ally with a political party means that the barrier erected in other countries by the explicit division of labour between union and party does not exist. The union is therefore led to participate directly in political conflicts. The combination of these two tendencies leads MODEF to fall between the Marxist and revolutionary syndicalist stools. On the one hand, the Marxist idea that it is necessary to overthrow the state in order to achieve long-term economic objectives is accepted. On the other hand, this task devolves to the union rather than the party. In the period of MODEF's

existence when revolution and reforms have been confused by the PCF, where revolution is seen as a series of reforms, the consequence is the tendency of organizations like MODEF to concentrate on political reforms rather than on the short-term direct economic interests of their members. In MODEF's case there has been an uneasy tension between political intervention and angry denials of political involvement. It is this kind of tension which led one MODEF official to make a distinction between "la politique économique" et "la politique politicienne". The former is legitimate territory for MODEF whilst the latter must not be allowed to interfere with the unity of the organization.(62)

#### 9. MODEF AS SOCIAL WORKER

It has already been seen in the previous chapter how important the question of personal leadership has been to MODEF. But the nature of such leadership has not been discussed. The analysis of the contacts between MODEF activists and supporters reveals the necessity to combine ideological appeal with a service role. The ability to mobilize support for the kinds of activity described in the preceding pages depends on maintaining close contacts between activists and supporters. This has been done in two ways; firstly by maintaining permanent structures at the level of the commune or canton; secondly by providing services to individuals.

MODEF's activity reflects the seasonal nature of agricultural workloads. In general, protest has been concentrated in the summer months when the difficulties of disposing of the harvest are at their most acute. During the winter most farmers have a relatively light workload and are therefore available for less pressing action so this has been the period where the Federations concentrate on their internal organization, holding meetings in as many villages as possible. Such meetings serve three purposes, education, recruitment and organization. The events of the past year and likely developments in the next are analyzed in order to draw the necessary conclusions about the future role of MODEF. Secondly, they are used for recruitment purposes where new members could acquire the basics of the organization's programme. Finally, organizational requirements are met by electing branch officials for the coming year. Similarly, the Federations use the opportunity of the respite provided by the winter to deal with their departmental organizational needs.

Nevertheless, the greater part of the efforts of MODEF activists are devoted to resolving the individual problems of their supporters. Farmers confronted with complex issues placed before them by the administration call upon local leaders to deal with them. Common examples include sorting out tax demands, social security contributions demands, difficulties in getting a pension, etc. As far as his supporters are concerned, the primary role of the MODEF activist is that of a social worker. His legitimacy therefore derives from his ability as a "fixer" and his understanding of administrative rules, regulations and procedure. The campaigning role is secondary.



This view is freely admitted by MODEF activists. Given the lack of administrative services in MODEF, supporters are forced to address themselves to local leaders. Indeed, the importance of this role is accepted, if not explicitly encouraged, by the fact that Federations hold surgeries throughout the department. For example, the Drôme Federation holds regular surgeries at Chabreuil, Rémuzat, Nyons, Taulignan, Dié, Bourdeaux, Loriol, Mirabel, St. Vallier, St. Barthelemy-de-Vais, Dieulefit, and Romans.(63) Those interviewed agreed that a large part of MODEF's support comes from individuals who had received such assistance or those who, insuring themselves against future risks, felt they might require aid in the future. Indeed, one National Council member argued that MODEF has been much more effective in defending individual rather than collective interests.(64) Though there is agreement on the importance of such clientelistic practices, there are differences over their desirability. Many activists, particularly the older ones, derive their sense of legitimacy and satisfaction from their role as social workers which usually permits them to achieve results as opposed to the limited success they enjoy as campaigning crusaders against government policy.

Others, particularly amongst the young, dislike this role. This is partly for ideological reasons, reasons made explicit in MODEF's own ideology. MODEF has always argued that farmers must free themselves from political subordination by refusing to base their political and professional choices on personalities.(65) Ironically, Marcel Ginoux, one of MODEF's own notables and PCF substitute deputy for Arles, identified the major difference between MODEF and the FNSEA as the attitude towards the relations between leaders and led. MODEF is seen as the egalitarian "syndicat de revendication" as opposed to the

hierarchical FNSEA, "le syndicat de service". On a more practical level, some MODEF activists worry about the consequence of social work-style operations. The concentration on individual grievances represents a danger to the organization since it creates loyalty to individual leaders rather than to the organization itself. This in turn leads to the danger that leaders operate as autonomous territorial chieftains rather than as members of a collective leadership. We have already seen how such patterns of loyalty have inhibited the rejuvenation of MODEF.

The problem for the anti-social work tendency is that MODEF did not invent clientelist practices in rural France. Organized clientelism dates back to at least the July Monarchy.(66) Neither is it specific to rural France as Southern Italy or the cities of Nice, Marseille and Lille show.(67) Given the role of agricultural organizations in France in supplying goods and services to their members, it is hardly surprising that MODEF should have had to conform to such expectations. Even if the entire organization was united in hostility to these practices, the problem would remain since the clients would demand services anyway. For example, even the dynamic Landes Federation had to adapt itself to its more conservative members. Unlike the FNSEA VAT services, the MODEF service in the Landes made no attempt at assisting its clients to draw up their own returns. It simply did the work for them and handed them completed documents.(68) MODEF's dilemma was that it was trapped in a position where it was obliged despite itself to engage in clientelistic practices in an effort to bring about a society where such relationships would be absent. The ultimate goal hindered the immediate needs of the organization required to attain the goal, and vice versa. The result has been that MODEF activists have acted in such

a way that though its most successful leaders have attained virtual notable status, this was done in an apologetic and almost accidental manner. The organization itself has not made systematic use of the opportunities available to engage in a collective clientelism. A glaring example is the failure of the Landes Federation to use the Chamber of Agriculture as an instrument of control during the period in which it was in MODEF hands.(69)

The 1982 Conference saw MODEF reiterate its desire to base its appeal in terms of ideology and policy than personality:

Sans doute devons-nous nous attacher à rendre service aux agriculteurs, leur faire des démarches, remplir des papiers, mais ne nous faisons pas d'illusions, sur ce terrain, nous ne battons pas la FNSEA... Bien entendu, certaines de nos Federations ont les moyens de rendre ces services et elles doivent le faire, mais ce ne doit pas être l'essentiel. C'est l'action syndicale qui doit primer. C'est cela qu'il faut faire comprendre aux agriculteurs.(70)

In consequence, the official position of the organization hindered it in its rivalry with the FNSEA. The FNSEA enjoys the best of both worlds. Whilst its leaders and activists were able to negotiate with government and or to campaign occasionally on issues such as prices, its administrative apparatus dealt with the clientelistic tasks. It was able to present itself as a modernizing force to the outside world whilst perpetuating more traditional hierarchical patterns in the countryside. The division of labour between employees and activists masked the contradiction. MODEF, on the other hand, was unable to

ignore the contradiction. Its ideology undermined the practice of many of its activists, a practice which played a major role in MODEF's relative success. This ideological block contributes also to the understanding of why the success has been only relative. MODEF's attempt to compete with FNSEA in ideological terms was therefore doomed to limited success unless the negotiating and campaigning of FNSEA activists became divorced from the role of the FNSEA administration. There are signs that this happened to a certain extent. The phenomenon of dual membership of MODEF and the FNSEA, which MODEF leaders believe is quite prevalent, is an indication. More politicized members of the FNSEA may have adhered to MODEF in order to campaign more vigorously against the government. At the same time, less scrupulous MODEF members are alleged to have joined the FNSEA in order to benefit from its services. However, for this divorce to become final, it would require the achievement of the FNSEA's formal objective of liberating farmers from their social and economic subordination - an objective which is against the interests of the leaders and the bureaucracy of the FNSEA.

#### 10. MEANS VS ENDS

The literature on the sociology of organization and social movements has raised a particularly important question of relevance to the MODEP issue. Since Michels, writers have devoted a great deal of attention to the question of "institutional needs" and the tendencies of organizations to pursue their own interests rather than those of their members which they formally exist to defend.(71) His concept of the iron law of oligarchy, according to which the bureaucracy of an organization becomes dominant, virtually irremovable, socially distinct from the organization's members and brings about a situation in which "...from a means, organization becomes an end..." has been the basis for many studies in organizational conservatism.(72)

Less subtle writers have fallen into the trap of what Hyman describes as re-ification.(73) Organizations are attributed personalities whilst the fact that it is individuals who form organizations is forgotten. So is the distinction between the interests of the membership and those of the organization. Such "institutional needs" have been identified by Hyman and Fryer as: "security and stability, financial solvency and strength, unity and cohesion and administrative efficiency."(74)

In general, not only is it assumed that these considerations undermine the pursuit of formal objectives, but that they are usually decisive in determining the behaviour of the organization. Hyman and Panitch are exceptional in denying the validity of the latter part of this assumption.(75) Hyman identified three main countervailing factors; the necessity for leaders to provide sufficient benefits to maintain the loyalty of members, the democratic preconceptions of activists and many

leaders and the existence of local centres of opposition.(76) To this list could be added the existence of rival alternative or even alternating leaderships.

The MODEF experience inspires three questions. The first two are orthodox; to what extent has MODEF acquired 'institutional needs' and how much influence have these 'needs' had upon its behaviour? The final one is perhaps more original, are 'institutional needs' necessarily in conflict with membership needs?

As this chapter has shown, MODEF's bureaucracy has not had much scope to develop. Its material weakness has been compounded by the ideological traditions of farm unionism, particularly the requirement that leaders must be active farmers. Full-time officials have therefore been materially prevented and ideologically obstructed from substituting themselves for the lay leaders. MODEF's outsider status in agricultural officialdom has further weakened the bureaucracy since there were no national negotiations in which to engage. Consequently expertise took second place to the capacity for creating personal clientelistic networks.

The absence of bureaucratic domination within MODEF led to the downgrading of 'institutional needs'.(77) Administrative efficiency as an end in itself went by the board for the simple reason that too few people in the organization had anything to gain from it. As for security and stability, this has not been a major concern, particularly before the decision to finally register as a union in 1975. Though the decision to change its legal status has not been particularly important in terms of the operation of MODEF, it does reveal a great deal about

the state of mind of the leadership. For most of its history, MODEF itself has not even been seen as a necessary means, let alone an end. It was caught between the fear that successful capitalist rationalization would eradicate its social base and the hope that the FNSEA majority would finally see the light and properly defend the interests of the family farm. Even in more recent years, the chequered history of the FNJ shows that long-term strength has been sacrificed to short-term expediency.

As to finance, the lack of interest in such problems within MODEF is legendary. It would appear that there has been an almost deliberate policy of tying the hands of the apparatus with the chains of poverty. Or, as one leader described MODEF's financial resources: "Celles que nous avons actuellement en certains départements sont toute juste suffisantes pour acheter des fleurs pour l'enterrement de l'exploitation familiale".(78)

It is nevertheless true that unity has been a major concern of MODEF, a concern not only enshrined in its Constitution but also deeply embedded in its decision-making practices. Indeed the lack of bureaucracy has been compensated by a surfeit of unity. Discipline by unity rather than bureaucracy has sustained the organization. But given MODEF's largely oppositional role under the de Gaulle-Pompidou-Giscard regimes, this emphasis on unity could not have been said to have been inimical to the pursuit of formal objectives. The aggregation of grievances, although not a primary aim in itself, was a concomitant to the fundamental aim - the defence of the family farm. The early stages of the Mitterrand regime saw some indications that unity and the defence of the family farm were no longer compatible when MODEF was obliged to take definite

decisions which could have an impact on agricultural policy-making. This demonstrates that there is no necessary conflict between formal objectives and institutional needs. That depends on the context. It was the context of the ghetto which accounted for the pre-eminence of MODEF's formal objectives over its institutional needs. The next two chapters deal with the ideological stability of MODEF as a result of this ghettoization and the nature of the isolation in which MODEF existed with respect to the major institutions of agriculture.



## CHAPTER 5 CLASS, STATE AND NATION: THE IDEOLOGY OF MODEF

### 1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter is concerned with MODEF'S view of agricultural society and its relations with the nation state and the international economy. The reasons for devoting so much attention to ideology are threefold. In the first place, political life in France has been characterized by the clash of ideologies rather than by the incrementalist conflicts unjustly associated with Anglo-Saxon politics. To determine an organization's position in the political spectrum it is therefore necessary to examine its ideology. Secondly, MODEF's ideology has played a major role in determining its organizational structure and the campaigning methods described in the previous chapter. Finally, in MODEF's case, ideology has an added importance. To a large extent, for MODEF activists, the word is the deed. Since MODEF was excluded from the decision-making process for most of its existence, and because it lacked material resources, it has been mainly concerned to express its dissent at the course of agricultural policy and to establish its identity in ideological terms.

The description of MODEF is preceded by some methodological remarks on the nature of ideology and the conception employed here. The remainder of the chapter is devoted to examining the ideology in relation to the three considerations identified above. Particular attention is given to the derivation of MODEF ideology, followed by a consideration of the impact of ideology on organization. Finally, the chapter concludes with an explanation of the low level of change in world view which MODEF has undergone since its inception. The examination of MODEF's ideology is

based on evidence drawn from interviews with MODEF officials and activists, selections from MODEF literature and the programmes which it has presented at various times since 1959.

Such a procedure obviously reflects a certain conception of ideology. It avoids the extreme of ideology as doctrine where ideology is seen merely as a collection of official statements. Such a conception involves treating ideology simply as a less reputable sub-genre of political philosophy. Similarly, the more extended conception in which ideology is described as "... traditions, beliefs and characteristic procedures and feelings..." vitiates the concept of all explanatory value.(1) In this view of ideology, it becomes impossible to make a distinction between ideology and practice and therefore impossible to assess the contribution of ideology to behaviour. By defining ideology in terms of verbal and written, formal and informal, expressions of beliefs, it will be possible to avoid the narrow view which would lead one to identify illusory contradictions and to avoid the tautological evasion of contradictions implicit in the broader view.

It might be objected that the use of MODEF's programmes as an element in the definition of its ideology is mistaken. For instance, if one applies Seliger's distinction between fundamental and operative ideology to MODEF, one could argue that the programme represents the operative every day ideology used to justify the fundamentals.(2) However, there are several reasons which make the Seliger thesis inapplicable. On the theoretical level, the distinction between fundamental and operative ideology is based on a dual confusion. By identifying the fundamental ideology in doctrinal terms and operative ideology in terms of practice, the potential conflict between the two types of ideology is, in reality,

the contradiction between ideology and practice.

As far as MODEF is concerned, the nature of the programme itself means that the programme is conceived of as a fundamental ideological statement. The programme has only been modified at infrequent intervals and, though it contains many policy proposals, it is not overly concerned with details. The programme is seen as laying down the basic principles which are supposed to guide the organization. Four themes in MODEF's ideology have been selected for analysis here. These are its idealization of the "traditional" model of small-scale agriculture, its ambivalence towards modernization, its hostility towards bureaucracy, and its nationalism. The first two themes have been chosen because of their importance in relation to MODEF's definition of the ideal form of agriculture and because they subsume such traditional themes of farm organization as private property in the land. The latter two are particularly interesting for the purpose of analyzing the connection between ideology and practice.

It will become apparent that MODEF has shared many of the preoccupations of previous agricultural movements, both in France and in other countries which have undergone the process of the second agricultural revolution. For example, many of the themes of MODEF were to be found in the agitation of American populists in the nineteenth century or the Dorgerist movement of the 1930s.(3) It is a short step from recognizing these similarities to equating the ideology of MODEF with that of the Dorgerists, a step which is mistaken for two reasons. At the simplest level, ideological similarities cannot obscure the fact that the conclusions drawn have been diametrically opposed. For instance, though both MODEF and Dorgeres would identify the source of agricultural

difficulties as being located in the cities, Dorgeres saw the villains as workers, civil servants and Jewish capitalists whilst MODEF found them in the technocrats and the trusts.

In order to assess the real degree of affiliation between MODEF and previous agricultural movements, it is vital to avoid an essentialist conception of ideology. Before describing MODEF's ideology in detail and attempting to place it in its social and historical context, it is necessary to make a few remarks about the social basis of ideology.

## 2. IDEOLOGY AND CLASS

MODEF leaders usually relate the ideology of their organization to the class position of their supporters. The last two chapters have shown that, in practice, the pattern of MODEF support is more complicated than that. By examining recent theoretical developments on the connection between ideology and class, one can gain greater insight into the connection between MODEF's ideology and its milieu. Ideas are not disembodied forces, they must be placed in the context of social classes and political arrangements. Both the theorists of totalitarianism and the metaphysical Marxists such as Luxemburg and Lukacs treat ideologies as abstractions. For the former, ideologies do not have a class content, they are not modified by social arrangements, they are simply good or bad wherever they are to be found. For the latter ideology is inseparable from class. Ideology is defined in terms of class and class is defined in terms of ideology to form a tautological circle.(4) More

recent Marxists have realized the problems involved in such conceptions (not the least of which is the empirical evidence for the distinction between class position and class consciousness). Poulantzas argues that the ideology typical of any class is a mixture of an ideology specific to itself and of the ideologies of other classes.(5) But since he still regards ideology as class-determined in all cases, he is unable to explain why certain ideologies should have an unusual appeal or why they should continue to persist after the class structure which had given them birth had changed or disappeared. One alternative argument developed by Laclau claims that ideology has no necessary class content - a view which undermines any attempt to place ideology in its social context. This is not the place to engage in a full-scale critique of Laclau but one point must be made. His views represent a kind of conspiracy theory of ideology in which individuals and organizations manipulate ideologies at their own convenience. Though ideologies can be manipulated within certain limits, one should not make the mistake that those who manipulate the ideologies are themselves free of or cynical about them. In MODEF's case, the pattern of conviction and expedience will be demonstrated.

The most convincing theory to date is that proposed by Therborn. He points out that the problem is quite simply resolved once it is admitted that there is more to ideology than class. An individual's class position is only one of the roles which he occupies in society. It is therefore possible to appeal to individuals in their role as worker, citizen of a nation-state, religious believer, etc. At the same time, "all ideologies in class societies exist in historical forms of articulation with different classes and class ideologies".(6)

In this light, it is no longer necessary to resort to theories of psychological inadequacies or of convergence between the extremes of Left and Right. Similarities between MODEF and, for instance, the Dorgerists, can be related to certain continuities in agricultural life (e.g. the farmer as property owner, manual labourer, country dweller, etc.,). On the other hand, the differences can be explained in terms of the changing nature of the rural political system. Once the ideology of MODEF has been described, the influence of the variables identified in Chapter 1 on the determination of the ideology will be examined.

### 3. MODEF'S IDEOLOGY

A) The Idealization of "Traditional" Small-Scale Agriculture The basis for the idealization of the "traditional" small-scale farming with which MODEF's founders grew up is the belief that farmers form a class or, more exactly, a race apart from their fellow countrymen.(7) One of the early leaders of MODEF wrote: "La paysannerie a une psychologie spéciale que l'on ne peut connaître si l'on n'a pas vécu, et assez longtemps, dans les milieux paysans".(8) To this group are then attributed certain qualities such as "le bon sens paysan" or "le sérieux".(9) Unlike other types of economic activity, one does not engage in farming for the sake of making money, one does so because "il faut aimer le métier, il faut pas compter les heures".(10) Outsiders can gain acceptance by conformity to the ideal. The death of Georges Pompidou after a long struggle against illness was the occasion of the only compliment that MODEF extended to any of the pre-1981 rulers of the Fifth Republic: "Le MODEF

rend hommage à la tenacité toute paysanne dont a fait preuve le président Georges Pompidou".(11) Refusal to recognize the validity of such qualities is therefore a provocation. "Nous sommes exaspérés devant ces injustices, à croire que la valeur d'un paysan, en tant que personne humaine, ne représente rien de bon aux yeux de certains".(12) These personal qualities are then extended to the agricultural system which both promotes and is sustained by them. Small-scale agriculture is therefore contrasted favourably with the developing capitalist nature of present day farming. Frederic Lindenstaedt describes the situation in the 1940s in the following terms:

On était au début de la mécanisation. On était au début d'une commercialisation concentrée. On était au début de financement de l'agriculture par les banques. On était vraiment encore l'exploitation familiale telle qu'elle avait subsisté depuis avant la guerre de 1939. C'était à peine modernisée. C'était encore des petits paysans qui travaillaient encore traditionnellement. C'était une mode de vie particulière et particulièrement heureuse parce qu'on ne dépendait pas de finance ou du commerce. On était assez tranquille...(13)

By comparison, the present is retrograde:

Aujourd'hui, l'exploitant doit dépenser, en moyenne, quatre vingt pour cent de sa récolte sous forme de remboursement d'annuités ou d'intérêts aux banques pour des emprunts à court et moyen terme. Et plus de la moitié des terres est gagée, hypothéquée, par le seul Credit Agricole. Les exploitations deviennent de plus en plus grandes, et les dettes également.(14)

Therefore, according to MODEF, it is necessary to make a clear connection between the problems of the farm and those of the farmer. "La defense de l'exploitation familiale ne veut pas seulement dire la terre de l'exploitation mais aussi leur mode de vie".(15)

Two specific aspects of this idealization are particularly important. These are the attachment to private ownership of the land and the emphasis placed on the homogeneity of the farming community. To quote Marcel Simmonet, one of the founders of MODEF and a pillar of the Charente Federation for many years, farmers felt:

une sensibilité très aiguisée, axée sur le droit de propriété, la terre son outil de travail, et le bien lègue par ses ancêtres. Toucher à cela, c'est arracher au paysan sa raison de vivre, sa liberté ancestrale à laquelle il tient par dessus tout.(16)

Less conservative MODEF activists have been more cynical. "Tous les Français sont des apprentis bourgeois".(17) Nevertheless they accept the legitimacy of private property. It is true that the case has usually been put in less theological terms but MODEF's reverence for property rights led it to oppose all schemes which would separate the right to work the land from the right to own it. Despite the enormous burden which purchase of the land involves in terms of fixed capital, no deviation from the principle of ownership was accepted until 1981. Indeed rather than being regarded as a necessity to guarantee access to the land, ownership is regarded as a positive virtue.



In 1981, this position was re-affirmed by Frederic Lindenstaedt. He rejected the view that renting rather than purchasing the land would be more advantageous to farmers and that the traditional attitude towards property is outdated. Arguing that high land prices are the result of speculation by non-farmers and high interest rates, and that rents would be just as much a burden in a period of declining incomes, he insisted on the need for property rights to be strengthened. Failure to do so would mean the eventual proletarianization of agriculture.(18)

Furthermore, this respect of property extends to that of others. The present system of inheritance requires the heir who remains on the land to his siblings for their share of the land by outright purchase or by rent. This means that many farmers have to subsidize their often wealthier brothers and sisters in urban occupations. Yet at no time has MODEF or any of its activists criticized these arrangements, even when incited to do so in interviews.

The emphasis on the homogeneity of the "traditional" farming community, (entirely mythical as we have seen), is less clearly expressed, but it is implicit in MODEF attitudes to capitalist agriculture. This kind of agriculture is condemned not because it is capitalist, nor because it involves exploitation, nor because of any of the traditional grievances against capitalism but because it is disruptive of the farming community and distorts the pattern of competition. It is not competition as such but the "unfair" competition of the capitalist sector which is resented. Large-scale farming is denounced for its excessive greed. The term "accapareurs" is often applied. "Les gros exploitants sont des accapareurs. Ils ont accaparé la terre, puis le syndicalisme.....Le Credit Agricole, on ne l'a pas fait pour les riches, mais ils l'ont accaparé....."(19)

On the other hand, richer farmers who are prepared to co-operate with their neighbours and use their privileged position to help the less well off are highly regarded. For example, the capitalist who is prepared to lend machinery to his neighbours is widely admired. Similarly, richer farmers involved in MODEF are considered with great respect. In the Vaucluse, for instance, the relatively prosperous MODEF contingent in Beaumes-de-Venise are praised by their less-privileged colleagues around Gordes.

In fact this view of the consequences of capitalism in agriculture is fundamental to MODEF. On the one hand, without such divisions, there would be no social basis for MODEF. On the other, condemnation of the divisions provides MODEF with a powerful ideological appeal. MODEF is able to criticize its opponents for being responsible for the development of class-based politics within agriculture. MODEF's view of the divisions within agriculture and the lack of common interests between all farmers has been summed up by one of its leaders. MODEF activists: "reconnaissent les divisions, mais ils les regrettent".(20)

B) Modernization Critics of MODEF often point to its alleged resistance to modernization in agriculture. As one of MODEF's leading adversaries put it: "On a été toujours partisan d'une evolution de l'agriculture et on a toujours encouragé les agriculteurs à ...se perfectionner. Je ne pense pas que le MODEF le fait".(21) Of course such criticisms involve concentrating on the benefits to the total exclusion of the disadvantages of technological advance. MODEF's ambivalence on the question of modernization reflects more accurately the mixed blessings

provided by such change. Sometimes it emphasizes the defence of the traditional way of life, at other times it declares itself ready to accept change, providing it is really progress and not a regression to an earlier age.

The former position has been stated openly less and less frequently. References such as the following are sometimes made. "En toutes circonstances notre organisation a pris la défense de l'agriculture traditionnelle....."(22) Of course this idea of traditional agriculture is just as much based on a myth as the concept of modernization to which it is opposed since agriculture has been in a constant state of change, particularly since 1945. Neither is MODEF normally so blunt since it cannot sustain itself purely through conservatism. However, such an idea lies just beneath the surface, emerging in references to the need to re-establish the right to distill alcohol, the frequent contrast which is made between the number of people the land could support in the past compared to the present, and in the attitudes towards the organization of marketing in certain areas.(23) For example, despite the costs in terms of transport, time and the uncertainty involved, no one in MODEF has contested the principle of markets such as Chateaurenard and Cavaillon.

On the other hand, there is a tendency to regard the idea of progress as an absolute necessity, indeed sometimes as a positive virtue. MODEF has frequently denied that it rejects modernization. For example:

Le progrès technique frappe à la porte du plus modeste exploitant agricole et lui impose ses lois. Comme tout autre celui-ci se rend compte qu'à très brève échéance il devra en tenir compte ou disparaître....(24)

Another leader regretted the fact that "le progrès qui peut nous permettre de vivre dans des conditions décentes, serve de prétexte à nous évincer". But, MODEF argues, unfortunately progress cannot be considered in the abstract. Its consequences must be considered. As Alfred Negre put it:

avant de vouloir transformer les conditions d'exploitation en France, il me paraît nécessaire de savoir dans quel but on veut le faire..... pour l'heure, dans ce pays et sous ce régime, la nécessité de l'adaptation de l'agriculture au monde moderne ne paraît pas avoir des objectifs évidents.(25)

There have been two responses to this question. On the one hand, the type of modernization designed to benefit a minority at the expense of the majority is denounced. For instance, meeting the Minister of Agriculture, Edgard Pisani, in June 1965, MODEF informed him that:

Notre mouvement n'est... nullement une sorte de poujadisme. Tout en luttant au jour le jour contre les plus criantes injustices sociales, il ne se borne pas à une position critique et négative mais il est aussi retourné vers la construction de l'avenir à la condition que celui-ci s'édifie au profit du plus grand nombre et non à celui d'un infime minorité.(26)

This is to argue that the social consequences of modernization outweigh the potential economic benefits. On the other hand, MODEF sometimes denies that modernization is really progress and argues that it represents a return to the past. MODEF has warned against the

"implantation d'une nouvelle féodalité foncière". Similarly, recent changes in the Statut des Fermiers et des Métayers in the Giscardian Loi d'Orientation of 1980 have been described as preparing the way for the establishment of a state of "neo-métayage".(27)

Que l'on nous excuse, nous n'avons rien de commun avec les faiseurs de nouveautés à tous prix qui mènent un tintamarre épouvantable autour d'idées prétendues nouvelles (et qui sont souvent bien vieilles) et dont le battage ne s'arrête que lorsque la comédie ne faisant plus recette, ceux qui tirent les ficelles lancent une autre "nouveauité" destinée, elle aussi, à détourner l'attention des véritables problèmes.(28)

MODEF's aim is to transform the economic conditions in which agriculture operates so that farmers will:

enfin disposer des moyens techniques d'innover à leur guise sans les soucis de manque de sérénité ou de garantie dans un métier qui aura enfin cessé d'être celui de 'forçat' mais pourra au contraire être celui de novateur.(29)

To obtain a clearer picture of MODEF's ambiguous attitude to modernization, it is necessary to break down this nebulous concept into some of its components - concentrating on the issues of management techniques and investment policy. As we have already seen capitalist agriculture is condemned for its negative effects on farmers. In contrast to government and FNSEA, MODEF stresses the desire to earn a reasonable income rather than the modernization of agriculture. "Nous ne demandons pas grand chose, seulement manger, boire, des vacances de

temps en temps, une voiture qui roule, le matériel qui marche..."(30)  
 Similarly, MODEF's 1978 programme gives priority to the question of incomes. The opening chapter is significantly entitled: "Assurer une juste rémunération du travail paysan".(31)

In this context, the word "juste" is a programme in itself, a striking contrast with the conventional FNSEA vocabulary of profitability. The following chapter deals with the problems of social security and only in the third chapter are the problems of modernization and efficiency mentioned. Even in this chapter, seven out of ten sections are concerned with property rights whilst only three deal with the economic and technical problems of the farm as an enterprise.

The concept of the farmer as "chef d'entreprise" propounded by the FNSEA is rejected by MODEF. It is seen as a purely political catch phrase designed to persuade farmers to identify themselves with their exploiters - the urban bourgeoisie. Though MODEF accepts that the farmer has to pay more and more attention to rational management techniques in operating his farm, it argues that this view is partial. Firstly, unlike the industrialist, the vast majority of farmers are also manual labourers. Secondly, in terms of income and standard of living, farmers are closer to the working class. Finally, since farmers are exploited by industry and finance, they would be ill-advised to identify with their exploiters. A clear example of this was seen in 1977 when Michel Debatisse of the FNSEA, Leon Gingembre of the Confédération Nationale des Petites et Moyennes Entreprises (CNPME), Yves Charpentier of the Confédération Générale des Cadres (CGC) and the president of the Association des Chambres de Métiers set up the Groupe d'Initiatives et

de Responsabilités (GIR). This Giscardian initiative was designed to cement links between farmers and the urban petit bourgeoisie. MODEF was quick to denounce the new organization as an effort to confuse the class divisions in politics and to prevent farmers associating with their genuine allies, the industrial working class, and the forces associated with the Union of the Left.(32) However, despite the political identification with the working class, MODEF does not believe that farmers are simply rural workers. The concept most frequently used by MODEF is the "petit patron exploité". The dual management-worker role of the farmer is recognized but without either being given primacy.

A less explicit theme is that greater investment in productive capital, if it is to be successful, leads to greater investment in land, and thus accentuates the pressure towards concentration of the land in fewer hands. This is not a rejection of investment and technical progress per se but of its economic consequences.

Finally, the concomitant of any rational investment programme is the existence of an efficient method of keeping track of income and expenditure. MODEF is against any moves to make accounts compulsory for the farmers, as the PS proposed. The official explanation is that any financial benefits derived from accounting would be swallowed by accountants' fees. The hostility, however, goes much deeper since it could to train farmers to prepare their own accounts or encourage them to Management Training Centres. The development of accounting systems would represent a change from an agriculture where the farmer is first and foremost a producer to one in which he is a businessman.

C) Bureaucracy MODEF's attitude to bureaucracy, and to the state bureaucracy in particular, is also characterized by ambivalence. Although MODEF has consistently called for state intervention to resolve various problems, it has almost equally consistently denounced most actions of right-wing governments. The fraud inspectorate are denounced as were the proposals for the establishment of the "producer groups":

Mais ou cela devient inquiétant c'est que les dits organismes doivent pour obtenir cette reconnaissance, s'engager à se soumettre aux indications du Ministère....Le groupement de producteurs sera finalement de gré ou de force un agent d'application de la politique décidée autoritairement par le gouvernement. Le paysan ne deviendra qu'un tacheron...(35)

The establishment of the SAFERs was criticized in similar terms. Even Pisani's efforts at streamlining the agricultural bureaucracy were attacked because they prepared the way for more efficient intervention into agricultural affairs. This also explains why MODEF was hostile to the reform of the Senate in 1969 since MODEF saw it as a way to allow non-farmers to intervene more effectively in the affairs of the profession. Even where bureaucracy is not a state bureaucracy, MODEF has objected. For example, MODEF has opposed the growing domination of co-operative directors and the members of the management committee inside the co-operatives and insists on the need to democratize the co-operatives by stimulating the participation of all their members.

This schizophrenic attitude reflects differences of opinion within the organization. As MODEF activists sometimes point out, control and regulation is accepted if it is seen to be effective in terms of putting



more money into the farmer's pocket or protecting him from the vagaries of the market. There are two outstanding examples. MODEF has systematically opposed all attempts to undermine the status of the Office National Interprofessionel des Céréales (ONIC). Similarly, in the Charente, MODEF poses as the defender of the BNIC, even if its actions are sometimes criticized. Pressure for liberalization of the cognac market is limited to the larger growers and certain merchants, particularly those specializing in top quality cognacs.

In the south-east, however, a different picture emerges. In the eyes of fruit and vegetable growers in traditionally badly organized markets, administrative regulation is only favoured if it applies to others. For instance, the majority of those interviewed welcomed the Product Boards proposed by the Mauroy government but saw as their main role the regulation of imports.

However, both tendencies are united in their hostility to the way in which officials work. For example the MODEF Federation of the Vaucluse denounced the fraud inspectors in the following stringent tones:

Les agents des services de repression des fraudes sont beaucoup plus zélés pour verbaliser les producteurs français que pour contrôler efficacement les normes et la qualité souvent approximatives des produits étrangers.(36)

Similarly, in the Charente, MODEF delegates in the Chamber of Agriculture have consistently denounced state intervention to prevent the spread of diseases such as brucellosis. At the same time, moves

which would increase the strength or the status of the Chamber's full-time officials have been resisted. The planned transfer of the Chamber offices to the city centre of Angoulême has been obstructed by MODEF's haggling over every detail.(37)

Denunciations of administrative "paperasserie" are frequent. The complexity of administrative procedures and the incomprehensibility of official forms are common targets of abuse. The more arbitrary government intervention appears, the more likely it is to be denounced. The governments periodic efforts to prohibit certain hybrid vines generally gives rise to a levée en masse. "On leur arrache leur vigne, on leur interdit de vendre du vin s'ils ont des plantes hybrides, ils se rebiffent. Ils manifestent en grande nombre et très facilement. Un coup de geuele, ça suffit".(38)

These specific grievances provide the basis for a more general theory, that of the state monopoly capitalist thesis advanced by the PCF. Bureaucrats are seen as agents of the monopoly capitalists who oppress the farmers. In a training document entitled La Crise Economique et le Programme du MODEF dated April 1978, the message is clearly spelt out:

La situation de l'agriculture est conditionnée depuis 1958 par la volonté des gouvernements au service des banques, des grandes industries et du gros négoce de faire produire des denrées agricoles en grande quantités, à des prix relativement de plus en plus bas et par un nombre toujours plus réduit de cultivateurs. Tout cela au nom de la 'libre concurrence'...L'agriculteur est ainsi totalement "intégré" dans le processus de la production monopoliste, mais il l'est en qualité de tout petit producteur

individuel face aux trusts souvent multinationaux de plus en plus concentrés et puissants et faisant, par dessus le marché, la loi dans l'Etat.

This hostility to bureaucracy has been translated into positive terms. Chapter 3 of MODEF's 1978 programme contains demands for the democratization of agricultural rent tribunals, of the SAFERS, of the procedures for "remembrement" and of the co-operatives. The final chapter is entitled: "Garantir les libertés paysannes et assurer une représentation démocratique dans tous les organismes agricoles".(39) This is largely devoted to calls for union pluralism, proportional representation in the Chambers of Agriculture, the democratization of the Credit Agricole and concludes with an appeal for "une lutte constante contre la bureaucratie et le gaspillage".(40)

In the absence of such democratic reforms, MODEF activists have to rely on the spirit of "debrouillardise" - the ability to get by through one's own more or less devious (and not necessarily legal) expedients. Bureaucratic control has either to be supplemented or subverted by individual initiative. Indeed the ideal form of state intervention is that which hinders one's colleagues but which allows the enterprising individual with an eye for the loophole to profit from his sharp sightedness. There are both moral and material benefits to be gained from success in such practices. On the one hand, there is the simple pleasure of outwitting the neighbours since, in the words of one young MODEF activist: "Ils se croient tous plus malins que les autres". On the other, there are the material advantages to be gained by sidestepping the administration. The classic example is the MODEF activist who circumvented planning regulations which require the farmer

to seek permission before constructing buildings housing more than 500 pigs. He simply built two separate buildings with a capacity of 450 each. In his own words, "il y a des lois bêtes en France". His self-respect forced him to find a way around the legal obstruction. To obey a stupid law would be plain stupid.

#### D) Nationalism

MODEF's nationalism has been directed against the USA and even more so the EEC. Although in its early years MODEF's hostility was directed against the US, it came to be replaced as a target by the EEC as the CAP was gradually established during the 1960s. MODEF has frequently denounced the role of American multinationals in the world food trade and the dominance of the US economy in the world monetary system. When President Nixon put an end to the Bretton Woods system in September 1971, Alfred Nègre denounced the US for its behaviour. "Brutalement, illicégalement, avec un cynisme total...Oncle Sam nous exporte son chômage". (41) The tradition has been maintained under the Lindenstaedt leadership as shown by his denunciation of the UK as the "American Trojan horse" in the EEC.

However, MODEF's criticisms of the EEC are of two kinds. At times MODEF couches its criticisms in an internationalist language, at other times the mask drops. In its internationalist phases, MODEF's most fundamental criticism of the EEC is that it has failed to achieve its stated objectives of the equalization of prices and costs of production,

in guaranteeing income parity and in ensuring financial solidarity between the member states. The incompetence of the EEC is repeatedly stressed. One MODEF official in the Vaucluse denounced the EEC as "une connerie" since the Fonds Européen d'Orientation et de Garantie Agricole (FEOGA) has proved itself totally incapable of organizing markets or even predicting crisis. Its role is limited to reacting to emergencies which it should have prevented. The same official claimed: "Nous sommes les vrais européens". This claim is often repeated by MODEF activists.(42) This is justified by the fact that only MODEF defends the principles of equal prices (by opposing the monetary compensation amounts), community preference and financial solidarity.

The EEC is commonly regarded in MODEF circles as "le nouveau colonialisme des nouveaux seigneurs".(43) In 1967, when the Le Monde agricultural correspondent argued that the EEC meant that French farmers would have to engage in "une véritable lutte au couteau" with other European farmers, MODEF reacted indignantly:

Nous sommes des gens trop pacifiques pour ne pas être révoltés par la perspective d'une lutte au couteau entre les paysans du Marché Commun qui, comme nous, sont les victimes de la liquidation de l'exploitation familiale pour le plus grand profit de financiers...dont les capitaux n'ont pas de patrie.(44)

When the Mansholt report was published the following year, MODEF's denunciation was once again couched in terms of the consequences for European agriculture, not in terms of French national interest. "Le MODEF leur oppose une terre ou le salaire de celui qui travaille sera respecté, facilité, encouragé..."(45)

Furthermore, although the EEC is severely criticized, except for a small minority within the organization, MODEF is not prepared to advocate pulling out of the Common Market. Major reform is necessary but the principle of European unity is not challenged. However, this European unity is seen in a somewhat wider perspective than the present capitalist club. Frequent contrasts are made between "l'Europe politique" or "l'Europe des peuples et des travailleurs" and the reality of the EEC as a mere free trade zone. These positions are once again justified on grounds of "common sense" and material interests rather than in abstract ideological terms. Because certain markets have been established, it is unrealistic to pull out. Similarly, trading with the Eastern bloc is presented as a means of making money rather than as a step towards détente.

MODEF's attitude to extension of the EEC and of the powers of the European Parliament is also couched in terms of farmer internationalism. MODEF argues that Spanish entry would not only be catastrophic for French agriculture but also for Spanish farmers. (It has, incidentally, failed to convince Spanish farm organizations of this.) As for the European Parliament, Frederic Lindenstaedt summed up MODEF's attitude to any extension of its powers. "C'est une institution ou l'on sent le poids de l'industrie et du grand négoce".(46) The deputies of the European Parliament are alleged to be animated by "des sentiments anti-paysans bêtes", the British MEP Barbara Castle being regarded as one of the worst offenders in the eyes of MODEF. But once again this is an argument in terms of class rather national interest or sovereignty.

However, this is only a partial view of MODEF's attitude to the EEC. MODEF officials have denounced Italian imports of wine in no uncertain

terms. Spanish imports are even more bitterly attacked because of Spain's non-membership of the EEC. "Ce serait un peu plus rentable si on n'avait pas cette concurrence étrangère...Il faut voir quelle marchandise, quelle merde plutôt, ils envoient en France. C'est ce qu'on donne, nous, à nos cochons".(47) Claims have also been made that agricultural surpluses in Europe are not the responsibility of French farmers but of foreign capitalist farms.(48) Whilst Emilien Soulié condemns the idea that there is any over-production of wine in France, Frederic Lindenstaedt goes further. "Nous disons qu'il n'y a pas de stocks de beurre en France. Les stocks c'est la responsabilité de la Hollande, de l'Allemagne et de la Grande Bretagne qui importent". This is, of course, a weak, indeed a double-edged argument. If the foreign farmers produce more than enough, then it is French agriculture which is superfluous. This argument is only tenable if one thinks purely in French terms and thinks only of the shortfall between French output and demand rather than the overall European levels. The case against the corresponsability tax on milk has been largely argued in this way with a consequent inability to convince enough farmers to be able to mount an effective campaign against the tax. The case in terms of the effect of the tax on dairy farmers has been relatively neglected.

One must also examine the MODEF claim to be the true Europeans. To the extent that it appeals to such clauses of the Treaty of Rome as the community preference clause, the claim is legitimate. However, MODEF has usually concentrated on appeals for the application of the safety clauses allowing governments to take exceptional measures for the temporary protection of a domestic industry. But the safety clauses are effectively anti-European clauses. Even though they form part of the Treaty of Rome, they contradict its philosophy. Their consistent application would negate the rest of the Treaty.(49)

MODEF has also demonstrated frequently that it regards supra-national developments within the Community, not only with hostility but with contempt. Alfred Nègre argued in 1965 that "Il est donc d'un intérêt fondamental pour les agriculteurs, les exploitants familiaux.... d'éviter à tout prix la création d'une autorité supranationale".(50) Twelve years later, Raymond Mineau was stressing the same theme - "Nous vérifions une fois de plus la noçivité du Marché Commun.....Ceci nous amène à redouter toute extension de ses prérogatives".(51) But MODEF has always insisted on the responsibility of the French government for the course of agricultural policy, in the sense that governments really had the power of decision whilst EEC deliberations were a charade. As Mineau explained in 1974: "Les responsabilités du Marché Commun ne doivent pas masquer celles du gouvernement. Le MODEF souligne que la responsabilité du gouvernement français est égale à celle de ces partenaires", and accused the government of practising "une opposition de comédie aux propositions de la Commission". The clearest expression of MODEF's contempt for the EEC came during the 1980 price negotiations when MODEF sent a telegram to the Minister of Agriculture, Pierre Mehaignerie, demanding that he walk out of the negotiations and unilaterally declare a fifteen per cent price rise. At the same time, it issued a press statement entitled "Assez de vaines discussions à Bruxelles! Rentrez à Paris".(52)

However, it is MODEF's insistence on import controls which ensures that the nationalist elements outweigh the internationalist elements in its ideology. As the spokesman for the MODEF commando which occupied a ship containing 750,000 gallons of wine and poured petrol into it said, "Nous entendons, par cette occupation, montrer notre détermination à nous opposer aux importations des vins italiens qui...cassent le marché des



vins français".(53) Import controls against foreign farmers mean that the largest and the smallest French producer are protected from competition. Whilst the capitalist farmers will derive a super-profit because of the reduced competition, the small farms will just provide a living for their owners. In other words, by demanding import controls MODEF lines up with its French adversaries against its potential foreign allies. A clearer demonstration of nationalism could not be made.

It must be pointed out, however, that this nationalism is not aggressive. MODEF does not encourage international competition. There is no great desire to find foreign markets or to compete with other countries. The emphasis on protectionism precludes this since: "on ne peut pas demander aux autres ce qu'on n'accepte pas soi-même".(54) "Agriculture in one country" has been MODEF's watchword:

Ainsi nous pensons que la solution de nos difficultés ne réside pas dans une concurrence acharnée visant à inonder les marchés de nos voisins de produits à bas prix, concurrence qui ne peut qu'être fatale aux exploitants familiaux qui la pratiquent comme à ceux qui la subissent. La solution est que chacun, maître chez soi, puisse régler lui-même ses difficultés et en même temps les comptes de ses propres requins.(55)

Given the emphasis on the reconquest of the domestic market, typical of weak industries, it is not surprising that the Giscardian dream of "le pétrole verte" has only aroused a cynical laugh from MODEF.

#### 4. THE ROOTS OF IDEOLOGY

Having described MODEF's ideology, it is now necessary to deal with three questions.

- 1) To what extent has such an ideology been determined by the traditions of agricultural organizations?
- 2) How much influence has been exercised by post-war economic and sociological changes in agriculture?
- 3) What has been the distinctive contribution of MODEF?

The themes identified above have, of course, been an integral part of agrarian politics, both in France and elsewhere. Regarded as the highest form of property under the Ancien regime, ownership of the land was the key to social prestige and political power. The individual's relation to the land determined his social and political position. Since the dominant position of the aristocracy derived from control of the land, the bourgeoisie invested in land in order to become part of the aristocracy. Judging by the extent of the lands held by the peasantry before 1789, the desire for land and the possibility of acquiring it was not limited to aristocracy and bourgeoisie. The purchase of land was an attempt by the peasant to liberate himself from his aristocratic oppressors.(56)

The Revolution and the political and often physical destruction of the aristocracy which it provoked spelt the emancipation of the peasantry. As the key feature of their previous subordination was their lack of

control over the land, freedom came to mean property. From then on, the confirmation of the peasantry in their legal independence was the price every regime had to pay for its political passivity. As Marx put it: "The peasants' title to property is the talisman by which capital captivates him..."(57)

This tradition has been maintained by the constant repetition of the theme by the various elites who have competed for their support throughout the Third and Fourth Republics. When Joseph Ruau identified private property in the land as the foundation stone of the regime in 1909 and when Henri Queuille idealized "l'exploitation familiale qui apparait pour celui qui la possède comme l'égale d'une mère nourricière, la protection tutélaire de ses droits, le gage le plus sûr de son indépendance" in 1927, they were merely conforming to and perpetuating the tradition.(58)

As each successive elite has embraced the defence of the farmer's property, each has outbid its predecessors in order to gain acceptance by the peasantry. Since entrenched elites can more easily deviate from their apparently intransigent ideology, the newer elites are often led to defend values which are not their own but which they have to accept in order to establish themselves. To use the term invented by an Italian observer, the new elite serves as a "loud-speaker" for the values of the old.(59) And like their predecessors, MODEF leaders have conformed to the pattern.

Again, the egalitarian myth owes a great deal to non-agricultural agrarians, particularly those of the Third Republic. The educational apparatus of a Republic whose rallying cry referred explicitly to

equality was designed to diffuse egalitarian ideology. Once out of the school gates, radical politicians took up the task of perpetuating such myths. Even the Catholics, by their insistence on the fact there was a place for everyone in the agricultural community - as landlord, farmer or labourer - and by the development of the "syndicat mixte" contributed to this myth despite themselves.

Frederic Lindenstaedt's article cited above is much more in a specifically French tradition, a tradition of which Marx was the declared opponent. MODEF's themes coincide to a much greater extent with the conservative anti-capitalist tradition of Rousseau and Proudhon. MODEF's attitude is akin to Rousseau's description of the idyllic society where:

no citizen shall be rich enough to buy another and none so poor as to be forced to sell himself; this in turn implies that the most exalted persons need moderation in goods and influence and the humbler moderation in avarice and covetousness.

Similarly, MODEF's ambivalence over modernization is an attitude with a long history. French ruling classes, whether aristocratic or bourgeois, were noted for their Malthusianism. Particularly after the Paris Commune, political fear of a large industrial working class and the economic fear of overproduction and stagnant markets paralyzed its modernizing tendencies. This lack of confidence was given the official seal of approval by the Méline tariffs, a capitulation before the deep-rooted fear of modernization ingrained in both peasant and bourgeois. The collapse of 1940 and the discredited ultra-traditionalism of the Vichy regime led to a transformation of capitalist and agricultural attitudes towards modernization. This new-found enthusiasm

was sustained by Marshall Aid. Only the most marginal sectors of economic activity and those on the margin of conventional politics rejected the new doctrines of efficiency and technological innovation. Even in agriculture, the young farmers of the Jeunesse Agricole Chretienne began to talk the same language as the technocrats of the Planning Commission - an alliance which was to be cemented by the Fifth Republic.

However, as the ex-Vichyites rehabilitated themselves and the consequences of modernization began to be visible, opposition was organized. Realizing that economic modernization would entail political modernization and the loss of their political pre-eminence, such elites attempted to stem the tide. But rather than directly confront the ideology of modernization, they preferred to graft on more traditional themes. In particular, they emphasized the human aspects of agriculture and the impossibility of treating agriculture as just another sector of the national economy. When the Left were themselves marginalized in agricultural politics and excluded from government, they had every incentive to regain their popular support by draping themselves in the colours which the mainstream bourgeoisie had abandoned. Along with the PCF and SFIO, MODEF based itself on such a strategy.

Hostility towards bureaucracy is yet another attitude to which the rural ruling classes have greatly contributed. This is part of a more general hostility to the rise of the nation state and the centralization of political and administrative control. For hundreds of years, there has been a tradition of rural disorder inspired by local notables as a weapon in their power struggles with the more or less temporary holders of central government power. The Revolution consecrated the Fronde

tradition with the royalist elites leading the peasantry in a crusade against Jacobinism in many of the peripheral areas - Vendée, Provence, etc. Only with the Third Republic did a centralized state manage to build itself upon peasant support. But this centralization did not involve direct intervention, except on the ideological level with the creation of compulsory education, and served to protect farmers against developments in world agriculture. Throughout this "golden age" (1880 - 1930), the majority of the political class continued to campaign actively against state intervention in agriculture in order to maintain their own pre-eminence. Henri Queuille's ambitious schemes for agricultural modernization in the 1920s and 1930s were sabotaged by vigorous opposition to the extension of the scope of the state.(60) The hostility of the inter-war leaders of agriculture to the Eight Hours Law cannot be explained solely by their unconscious or conscious subordination to the interests of urban capitalists. It must be seen in terms of their opposition in principle to the state intervening to regulate dealings between individual citizens - a development which would undermine their own role as mediators between state and commune, official and citizen.

The commitment of socialists and communists to state intervention as a way of resolving problems was strengthened by this right-wing opposition - though their influence was limited. However, the final victory of right-wing technocracy in 1958 and the end of their ability to influence the direction and intention of state intervention led them to take a more nuanced view. State and state bureaucracies were no longer concepts which were taken for granted. Certain sections of the Left and leftish regionalists began to adopt themes which had traditionally been those of the Right. In this context, MODEF's hostility to the bureaucracy of the state and its role in agriculture is not specific to agricultural

politics or to allegedly backward sectors of the economy.

Nationalism has almost invariably been a feature of farm movements. This has been the case in nineteenth century America and Ireland as much in twentieth century China, as much in 1930s France as that of the present day. Because this nationalist aspect appears to be inherent in agricultural organizations, it has been taken for granted. However, recently, historians of the French peasantry have begun to explore the lack of nationalist feeling in nineteenth century France and the efforts of governments and their rural supporters to instil such sentiments.(61) Weber has produced the classic account of this situation. He quotes Alexandre Sanguinetti who argued that national consciousness stemmed from deliberate policies which "permitted the making of France despite the French, or in the midst of their indifference...France is a deliberate political construction, for whose creation the central power has never ceased to fight".(62)

The main instrument employed in this struggle was the education system. According to Weber, rural national consciousness dates from the educational reforms of the Third Republic. Political missionaries disguised as teachers instilled nationalist doctrines. Their task, as seen by one of their masters, Gambetta, was to create the "new Frenchmen", soldiers capable of "enduring bravely all conceivable hardship for the nation".(63) During World War One the success of the educational crusade was convincingly and catastrophically demonstrated by the peasantry. Post-war farm leaders were amongst the leading promoters of nationalist ideology. Ritual tributes to the dead served as highly effective emotional appeals to the survivors. But when the nationalists defected in 1940, the door was open for the Left to re-acquire the patent on patriotism.

As the consequences of the post-war transformation have become more and more evident, traditional values such as the desirability of private property have provided a refuge. As the present becomes more difficult, the past is seen in a more attractive light, particularly selective aspects of the past. This is a tendency which has been documented in rural societies undergoing rapid and continuous change. The reconstitution of social life centres on the part of the social structure which has best survived the changes - thus giving this structure or institution a new lease of life.(64) The institution of property is one of the few elements which has not been transformed since 1945. Given the voluntary and compulsory rural exodus, many farmers have been labouring under the constant fear of proletarianization. Since property has been the distinguishing feature between the farmer and the proletarian, the farmers' position in agricultural society has dictated his place in the social hierarchy. To hold on to his status in an increasingly rigid class structure, his property must be retained at all costs. Similarly, because of the changes in the nature of economic activity on the farm, particularly the intensification of labour and the subordination of agriculture to industry, the formal independence which property ownership implies is seen as a great advantage. The position of many Marxists and modernizers that property makes no difference to the real economic situation of the farmer is misleading. If it is legitimate to argue that agriculture is becoming more and more subordinate to industry, it is a mistake to equate this with the proletarianization of farmers.(65) Ownership guarantees the farmer's managerial status, and his freedom to organize his working day as he wishes. In other words, job satisfaction depends on the farmer's legal independence. This freedom is highly prized. For example, in the Vaucluse farmers hire day labourers from time to time, not for



assistance in essential work, but to free themselves for a day's hunting. Such independence obviously costs money but is nonetheless very real and real enough for farmers to be willing to accept that "la liberté ça coûte cher".(66)

It has been argued in Chapter 2 that the egalitarian view of the past was based on a myth. Similarly, developments in post-war agriculture have only served to strengthen class differentiation. The obvious question to ask is why the egalitarian idyll has survived the cut-throat competitive practices of modern agriculture? Quite simply, it is a useful myth for defensive mobilization. As Kautsky pointed out, one of the constraints on the development of capitalism in agriculture is that land is limited.(67) The creation of capitalist farming on an extensive scale involves the centralization of ownership of land, unlike industry where capitalist firms can develop without eliminating their competitors, at least in the short and medium term. The development of capitalist agriculture depends on the expulsion of small-scale farmers. Co-existence is difficult. Furthermore, agricultural life has always been characterized by mutual aid, a situation which has not been changed by mechanization but which threatens to do so. When a large farmer acquires a combine harvester he is no longer dependent on his neighbour's help to bring in the harvest. To use an example of more modern relevance, a farmer who expands may be able to purchase his own machines rather than sharing in a co-operative purchase. This will undermine the financial strength of the co-operative and restrict the access of smaller farmers to the machinery needed for them to remain competitive.

Similarly, MODEF's ambivalence towards modernization can be traced to the material drawbacks, such as exodus, debt, intensification of labour, etc. which were described in Chapter 2. In the same way, hostility to bureaucracy is connected with the role of the state in promoting these changes. Even if the process of modernization had been an unmitigated success, farmers would still have reason to criticize the intervention of officialdom into their affairs. Official intervention in production and marketing involves restrictions on the autonomy which is seen as one of the great advantages of the profession. There is also the problem of the culture gap between farmers and officials. In the pre-war system of partial political integration, the farmer could hide behind the screen of his political representatives. Now he must face the administration in a position of weakness. The administration is governed by formal rules of procedure, its members selected on the basis of formal education. The farmer, on the other hand, whatever the extent of his formal education (which has been constantly increasing), thinks in terms of concrete and particular decisions. It is as if there were two opposing cultures, reinforced by the conflicting interests of officials and farmers. The official's career depends on a mastery of bureaucratic procedure and successful implementation of instructions handed down, the farmer's success may well depend on evading such administrative decisions. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that farmers and farm organizations such as MODEF see themselves as victims of bureaucratic aggression.

Neither are the drawbacks of bureaucracy confined to the cultural level. Financial reasons also exist. Even in terms of time spent in dealings with officials or filling in forms, the farmer is kept from his work on

the farm. More important, bureaucracy which is regarded to have failed discredits the idea of bureaucratic intervention. For example, frequent criticisms are voiced against market regulation agencies such as the Fonds d'Orientation et de Régulation des Marchés Agricoles (FORMA) on the grounds that its policies have either failed or will fail. Alternatively, it is sometimes argued that the policy pursued is not the most efficient way of attaining the objective. For instance, it is often argued in the wine industry that import controls would be more effective than domestic production controls in attaining objectives such as higher quality produce or reasonable prices for the grower.

Finally, the most obvious explanation of agricultural nationalism must be rejected. The kind of Canard Enchaîné argument which sees such nationalism as a mask for less legitimate material interest involves a contradiction. To argue in such a way is to accept that nationalist rhetoric is in itself legitimate. But such legitimacy cannot exist if a genuine nationalist consciousness does not already exist. To frame demands in nationalist terms would otherwise be intellectually impossible and politically useless. However, once such a consciousness has been created, economic interests serve to reinforce it. Post-war France saw a combination of circumstances which provided a firm basis for nationalist propaganda. Having survived foreign occupation, rapid economic change undermined agricultural society. This process was accompanied by the rise of the EEC. Not only did the smaller operators see themselves as victims of capitalism and technocracy, but as victims of foreign capitalists and technocrats. Contrary to the hopes of the Liberation period, the headquarters of foreign exploitation merely shifted from Berlin to Brussels.

MODEF's ideological creativity has been extremely limited. The externally imposed aspects, the history of elite domination and the pattern of post-war modernization have played the major role in shaping MODEF ideology. Even where MODEF has contributed distinctive elements to the ideology, these are largely re-iterations of Leftist views of agriculture and society first put forward in the nineteenth century. Bearing this in mind, Mineau's warning against "les faiseurs de nouveautés" is inevitable for an organization which seeks to put old wine into new bottles. For instance, MODEF's explicit justification for the defence of private ownership can be traced back to the Guesdists. Just as the Guesdists argued for the defence of small property against the encroachment of capitalism, MODEF sees respect for private ownership and the consequent social structure it sustains as a stronghold from which to resist the extension of capitalism in agriculture.(68) The real difference between MODEF and the Guesdists is that MODEF's attachment to private property is more sincere. Unlike nineteenth century socialists MODEF has experienced the transient nature of reformism as progressive reforms have later been undermined by right-wing governments. The history of the evasion, non-application and subtle modifications of the Statut des Fermiers et des Métayers is a classic example. Surrendering the protection of property rights and the aura of legitimacy which surrounds them for more or less temporary reforms would, in MODEF's view, be totally irresponsible.

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and socialist theory in France, perpetuated by Utopian socialists, anarchists such as Proudhon and revolutionary syndicalists. Hostility to bureaucracy and its supposed liaison with the dominant economic elites has also been acquired from other sources, such as the post-war PCF and the pre-war traditions of the Left. MODEF's only advance over the CGPT is the replacement of the populist "200 familles/mur d'argent" rhetoric of the 1930s with the pseudo-scientific jargon of the State monopoly capitalism theory. Finally, even though MODEF's non-aggressive nationalism distinguishes it from the PCF and the contemporary Left in general, it nevertheless conforms to Jaures' synthesis of nationalism and internationalism.

MODEF provides a particularly clear case of an ideological synthesis as opposed to the genesis of an ideology. This synthesis has been elaborated on the basis of a combination of expediency and conviction. The ideological traditions of Left and Right, of popular movements and non-farming elites have been combined to analyze the changes brought about since 1945. For example, MODEF has perpetuated the Leftist tradition of defending private property. But unlike its forerunners, this is not simply a matter of political expediency. MODEF has internalized Rightist values on the desirability of private ownership. At the same time, MODEF's nationalism stems from the same coincidence of expediency and principle. The Resistance period led to a temporary identification of the national interest and the interest of the Left. Activists who had themselves been profoundly imbued with nationalist ideology were led to return to the old themes of the Resistance. Since the greatest successes of the Left, and of the PCF in particular, occurred when it was identified with the cause of the nation, expediency

dictated the use of nationalist rhetoric. The contradiction between de Gaulle's nationalist foreign policy and the growing internationalization of the economy in MODEF's formative years reinforced this tendency.

Paradoxically, MODEF's lack of originality and its reliance on synthesis has been one of its most original features. It is precisely this which distinguishes it from movements with which it has been equated. Unlike the CGPT, MODEF's commitment to values traditionally regarded as non-socialist, such as private property, has been reinforced by a genuine belief in the values. On the other hand, contrary to the campaigning movements of the Right, such as Dorgerism or Poujadism, MODEF has attempted to link the ideas of rural and urban progressives and conservatives, thus avoiding the danger of creating an isolated movement of reaction oblivious of the need to secure urban support.

##### 5. THE IMPACT OF IDEOLOGY ON PRACTICE

Because of the mixture of conviction and expediency from which MODEF's ideology has been forged, the consequences of the ideology on the organization have been both positive and negative. In turn the combination of costs and benefits helps to explain some of the apparent contradictions in the ideology. The two most obvious contradictions which are readily visible are that between the idealization of the past and the positive aspect of MODEF's ambivalence to modernization, and that between anti-bureaucratic individualism and nationalism.

Purely on the formal level, the first contradiction is illuminating. It means that MODEF accepts the idea of a modern mechanized agriculture, yet at the same time it defends the traditional concept of property. In practical terms, this means a labour-intensive capital-intensive agriculture based on private property in the land with the obvious economic consequences. Similarly, if one is aware of the consequences of mechanization and modernization, it is contradictory to argue that one is only interested in securing a reasonable income. In fact they are guilty of the same blindness for which they reproach others - the view which sees technical progress as an economically neutral process. MODEF wants the security of the past with the convenience of modernity. Put bluntly, they want to have their cake and eat it. Yet the contradiction has practical advantages. The past has great mobilizing potential. An appeal to the past to criticize the present is yet another area where ideology as conviction and as an instrument coincide. Oppositional organizations have consistently used such rhetoric in order to create a situation in which: "Images of the future provoke, not a denial of the present, but a re-structuring of the present in accordance with the organizing principles exhibited in the idealized portrayal of the past".(69)

Ambivalence towards modernization also provides advantages for an organization seeking to maximize its support. It allows MODEF to appeal to the most progressive, in terms of economic modernization and political ideas, and at the same time give comfort to the least dynamic members of the profession. In order to maximize support, a certain element of confusion is advantageous, a political manifestation of the marketing strategy of product differentiation. Such contradictions are reconciled in practice by the unitarian practices described in the



previous chapter. Weak discipline and the emphasis on unanimous rather than majority decision-making hold this disparate alliance together. Another of MODEP's distinctive practices, its reluctant clientelism, can also be traced to the ideology of the organization. Apart from the contradictions mentioned above, there are contradictions within each element of the ideology. For example, reluctant clientelism reflects MODEP's vision of the past and the emphasis on property and egalitarianism, which contradict each other. The importance which is attached to property undermines egalitarian sentiments since it inevitably leads to the definition of personality and social status in terms of economic position.(70) This allows the emergence of the quasi-notables within the organization. At the same time, egalitarian feelings are strong enough to ensure that such quasi-notable status is never considered fully legitimate by the activists. Furthermore, the levelling-down type of egalitarianism typical of farm and small business protest organizations also has adverse effects.(71) On the one hand, their hostility to successful members of the profession reduces their appeal to those who hope to be successful. On the other, governments are quick to see the moral weakness which this lack of confidence implies and do not hesitate to press home their advantage. Such an attitude also leads to defensiveness, a defensiveness which is re-inforced by the ambivalent attitude to modernization. The danger of emphasizing the prevention of change is that one is trapped on the defensive, reacting to rather than initiating events. This, in turn, ensures that even victories are limited to negative ones, thus contributing to the demoralization of the activists. In MODEP, this demoralization was clearly apparent in the pre-1981 electoral period.

The contradiction between MODEF's anti-bureaucratic spirit of "debrouillardise" and its nationalism appears to be even more serious for the organization. An ideology emphasizing the role of the individual is confronted with one which is, by definition, concerned with the collective. The individualist spirit undermines organization. The logical consequence is to drive farmers away from collective solutions towards individual evasions of problems. Furthermore the respect in which the "debrouillardise" attitude is held demonstrates that this individualism is not one of passive isolation but competitive individualism. All this tends to legitimize the "free rider syndrome". Many farmers may benefit from the presence of MODEF without paying the costs of activism or even membership.(72)

These problems have been recognized by MODEF leaders. Rene Gondran gave three reasons for the underdeveloped state of the MODEF apparatus.

Le MODEF est un "mouvement" sans structure très stricte, qui s'est développé bien souvent d'une façon anarchique... Nos dirigeants à tous les stades sont de petits et moyens exploitants, donc sans grands moyens financiers personnels pour consacrer une grande partie de leur temps au syndicalisme. Enfin l'état d'esprit des paysans assez conservateur, très prudent, et indépendant à l'excès sont autant d'obstacles qu'il nous faut cependant franchir si nous voulons atteindre notre but.(73)

MODEF's nationalist rhetoric must be seen in this light. Far from being contradictory, MODEF's nationalism is a consequence of its individualism. MODEF provides a classic confirmation of Ernst Gellner's thesis on nationalism. According to Gellner, nationalism emerged with

the rise of individualist ideologies and has served a major role in neutralizing the potential for disaggregation created by individualism.(74) Furthermore, nationalist declarations are yet another weapon in MODEF efforts to reach the widest possible audience. Firstly, to speak in terms of class is to place oneself in a particular political tradition and thus to reduce one's potential audience. Perhaps more importantly, MODEF's failure to define class in agriculture and its insistence on national themes allows it to attract farmers of relatively comfortable economic and social status. Class status is left to the individual farmer to decide. Someone who joins MODEF is considered an honorary small or medium-scale farmer, no matter what size his farm is. Attracting the farmer from the upper income brackets of the profession has many practical advantages. Not only is he likely to be able to accept more responsibility in the organization but given the notabilist nature of local politics in many areas, he is more likely to bring other farmers with him into the organization. This does not mean that the MODEF apparatus is dominated by large farmers, merely that there is no discrimination against them to prevent them joining and actively participating in MODEF.

## 6. STABILITY AND CHANGE

The themes stressed by MODEF have shown a great deal of stability ever since the creation of MODEF. But given that French society in general, and agriculture in particular, have undergone radical changes in the intervening years this is somewhat surprising. Tavernier argued that MODEF's attitude changed after 1968.(75) Up till then MODEF confined itself to denouncing government policy without making any positive contribution. Realizing that such a strategy was no longer viable MODEF adopted a more careful approach to government proposals, countering them with its own proposals rather than just issuing a denunciation. However this was merely a change in the style of operation rather than one of ideology. The constructive proposals were based on the same ideological foundations as the negative denunciations. What did happen is that, as MODEF attracted more militants after 1968, it was able to devote enough time to developing a clearer picture of the agriculture it wished to maintain. This was essentially a process of filling in details rather than one of ideological innovation.

This stability has been largely due to the fact that MODEF has had an extremely minor part in the decision-making processes responsible for the formation of agricultural policy. This allowed it to express its views without being forced to adapt them to the conflicting pressures which full participation in the political system would have involved. Indeed expressing its views was the *raison d'être* of the organization since its bureaucracy was too weak to develop its own interests. At the same time, because of the political domination by the Right, it had no

sense of loyalty or responsibility towards the governing party. Within MODEF, the stability of the leadership, mainly occupied by the practical details of running an organization, restricted the potential for ideological change. Finally, the state of "semi-clandestinity" to which MODEF was confined meant that the only reaction which MODEF received from farmers was confined to the local level and to the periodic Chamber of Agriculture elections - which in any case reinforced the ideology by the increase in the MODEF vote until 1979.

This interpretation is reinforced by three quite different examples. The first is the change in the ideology of the CNJA leaders as they took over the FNSEA in the early and mid-1960's, and their gradual abandon of their more progressive ideas.(76) The emergence of a Left opposition in the CNJA, particularly in the West, as the consequences of Gaullist agricultural policy and CNJA participation in its elaboration became apparent provides yet another example of the pressures leading to ideological change. The final example consists of the changes within MODEF which became visible in the late 1970s and which were accentuated by the installation of the Left in power in 1981. The major changes which have been visible are the attitude towards the place of French agriculture in the world economy and on the question of property. The 1978 programme contains a reference to the desirability of agriculture contributing to the balance of payments and helping to end hunger in the world. Both of these concepts are new in MODEF ideology. Until then exports were considered as a poor substitute for the domestic market and hence regarded with suspicion. However these ideas are still viewed with mixed feelings. One leading MODEF official in the south-east, interviewed in 1981, recounted the story of Daudet's miller who, a

victim of modernization, claimed that his non-existent work was destined for export. Similarly other MODEF officials and activists have criticized the Lomé Convention for wrecking Third World agriculture, encouraging the development of cash crops and therefore leading to even greater hunger in these countries.

The explanation for this somewhat limited change of heart lies in the growing awareness of the importance of exports for maintaining the demand for French products. As pointed out in Chapter 2 not every farmer benefits equally from export markets, but most have something to lose if export markets were closed. This is particularly the case in the south-east which is, of course, a stronghold of MODEF, and where a fall in demand for fruit in Germany is immediately felt in terms of lower prices at Chateaurenard.

At the same time, the decline in the number of farmers and the agricultural share of GNP means that it is no longer automatically in the interests of the nation that agriculture should be supported. MODEF is therefore led to place more stress on how important agriculture is and should be in the national economy in order to give its demands a greater legitimacy. The rights of property no longer remain sacrosanct. The programme adopted in 1978 contains a proposal that no farm should be allowed to grow beyond the legal maximum size laid down by the Prefect in each department - even if the farmer involved inherited more land. This represents a violation of principle which is justified by its conformity to other principles - the desire to restrain the development of capitalist agriculture and the concentration of farms. More radical changes were announced at the 1982 Congress. Less than a year after Lindenstaedt's impassioned defence of private property and the need for

the farmer to own his own land, a sub-committee of the National Executive set up to study the land question reported in favour of separating the right to own from the right to farm the land. Similarly, after Lindenstaedt's attack on the PS proposal to set up departmental land offices, the same proposal was endorsed.(77)

There are several factors behind this change of heart. On the one hand, it registered the victory of the PS in 1981 and represented the price which MODEF had to pay for official recognition. On the other, it is an admission of the economic costs to farmers of being forced to buy their land. This reveals that official recognition placed constraints on MODEF. Though it had some prospect of exercising influence over the direction of agricultural policy, at the same time it could not alienate the government or the PS. Similarly, it could no longer adopt positions knowing that they would not directly affect the farmer's position since its positions might have been taken more seriously than previously. If, as Seliger argues, the key to ideological change is the demands of day-to-day political conflict and compromise, the stability of MODEF's ideology was largely the result of its political isolation.(78) In this case, further developments can be expected which will change the ideology and policy of MODEF.

## 7. CONCLUSION

Out of this examination of MODEF ideology, three points concerning the class content and political location of the ideology emerge. In the first place, MODEF has succeeded in amalgamating different ideological traditions. Its multi-faceted Utopia has something to appeal to everyone - tradition, tranquility and progress. This shows that ideology has no necessary class content. MODEF's nationalism is a clear example of a strategy based on occupying the ground vacated by opponents since the attempt to identify oneself with the nation has been the key to political success in twentieth century French politics. Secondly, this strategy has been a generally conservative one. Any ideology which seeks to appeal to a mass audience has a dual nature, including both adaptive and transformative elements. The former identifies and justifies certain traditional features of the environment in which the ideology has to operate. Transformative elements are those which are concerned with the changes deemed necessary. The evidence in this chapter suggests that MODEF's ideology has been dominated by the adaptive elements but that its originality has been to use adaptive ideology for transformative purposes. Given the drastic changes which farmers have experienced, this has permitted MODEF to secure a respectable level of support but has also placed limits on its potential for mobilization. Finally, given this ideological conservatism, the limited extent to which Marxism has impinged on the organization is hardly surprising. What is surprising is that many of MODEF's leaders and activists belong to political parties, such as the PCF or factions within the PS, which regard themselves as Marxists. The reasons for this dichotomy will be examined in Chapter 7 where the connections between MODEF and the parties of the Left are examined in detail. The ideological vacuum left by Marxism has been filled by another tradition



of popular politics in France. If MODEF were to appoint a philosophical guru for the organization, the obvious choice would be Proudhon. His conservative radicalism appears to have won a posthumous victory over his apparently more influential contemporary.

CHAPTER 6     MODEF IN THE AGRI-COMPLEX

As the frequent use of abbreviations - from which the present study, along with most works on French agriculture, suffers - suggests, there is a wide range of organizations and para-statal institutions concerned with the political, economic and social aspects of agriculture. In the interests of brevity, these will be collectively referred to as the agri-complex. This term is also useful in the sense that the private and public are not always clearly distinct in agriculture. Not only are the distinctions between separate organizations and institutions sometimes unclear but it is also often difficult to decide where voluntary effort finishes and state regulation begins.

The first half of the chapter is concerned with the representational side of the agri-complex. These are the organizations which claim to represent the overall interests of the more or less numerous body of supporters which they attract, the FNSEA, the FFA and the Paysan Travailleuse tendency. Given the pre-eminence of the FNSEA in this field, particular attention is paid to the relations between it and MODEF. It will be seen that the MODEF strategy of exerting pressure on the FNSEA has had only limited success thanks to the contradictions of its classical approach to the united front. The electoral damage inflicted on MODEF by the FFA and the intellectual barriers placed in front of MODEF by the Paysan Travailleuse group are also considered.

The institutional foci of the representational side of the agri-complex are the Chambers of Agriculture. The section of the chapter dealing with them is primarily concerned with the MODEF policy of using the Chambers as agitational platforms. The way in which the FNSEA has

assisted or obliged MODEF to adopt such a policy is also described.

The bulk of the latter half of the chapter is devoted to the subject of the socio-economic parts of the agri-complex. The three major areas, the Credit agricole, agricultural co-operation and the social security system are analysed in terms of MODEF attitudes towards them and the role which MODEF has played within them. It will be seen that the latter has been dictated by the former; the more positive the evaluation, the greater the participation. There is, however, another dimension, that of the extent of the institutional barriers to MODEF participation. The ideological constraints identified in the previous chapter will also be seen to have had an inhibiting effect on MODEF strategy, precluding a systematic campaign of colonization of the socio-economic institutions and the construction of clientelist networks.

Finally, the chapter concludes with a case study of one of the para-statal agencies of agricultural policy - the SAFERS. The changes in MODEF attitude and behaviour towards the SAFERS are charted. These changes of stance lead to the conclusion that MODEF has been more effective when contesting individual issues than when trying to change the thrust of agricultural policy under the Fifth Republic.

## 1. THE FNSEA

The FNSEA plays a key role in the agri-complex, being the instrument of coordination between the various agencies of the complex. Not only is the FNSEA the largest representative organization of the farming community, but its leaders are also to be found in influential positions in many other organizations and institutions, both in the economic and representative sides. By its dominance in the Assemblée Permanente des Presidents des Chambres d'Agriculture (APPCA), it combines a de facto and de jure status as the official voice of agriculture.

This situation has arisen because of the strategy of alliance between the FNSEA and the Gaullist regime and its successors, adopted by both sides after the 1965 Presidential elections. Since then, as Keeler has pointed out, "the modernization process has been furthered through a corporatist dynamic, i.e. through the development of an intimate, symbiotic relationship between the state and the FNSEA." (1) Keeler continues:

The FNSEA has maintained its hegemonic status largely because of tangible and intangible benefits it receives from the state in exchange for performing the official union role... By reinforcing FNSEA hegemony, the state has pushed forward the modernization process while maintaining at least a semblance of social peace. But it has also been forced to ignore, if not to sanction, the misuse of public funds and semi-public agencies and to stifle legitimate expressions of pluralism in agriculture. (2)

The major expression of such pluralism has, of course, been MODEF. The FNSEA has been the biggest obstacle which MODEF has had to overcome in its intermediate aim of extending its own influence and in its fundamental aim of reversing the course of agricultural policy. Naturally, this conflict has meant that little love has been lost between the two organizations.

As national organizations, communication between MODEF and the FNSEA have been limited to abuse. No description is considered offensive enough by MODEF when it comes to characterizing the leaders of the FNSEA. The former FNSEA president Michel Debatisse was described as a:

cumulard aux mains blanches... Partisan d'un syndicalisme entretenu et appointé, M. Debatisse n'en continuera sans doute pas moins à parader à la télévision, à parler au nom de toute la profession et à siéger au Conseil Economique, palpant à travers de ces divers responsabilités des indemnités très largement supérieures à celles d'un parlementaire.(3)

Similarly other leaders of the FNSEA have had the same doubts cast upon their motives. "Aussitôt le décès de Blondelle, de Caffarelli avait pensé que la présidence de l'APPCA lui irait comme un gant".(4) And just as the leaders of the FNSEA were alleged to be motivated by their own self interest, the organization itself was considered in the same light. The behaviour of the FNSEA was explained in terms of the financial assistance which it obtained from the state, i.e. its co-operation was secured through bribery. L'Exploitant Familial of July 1975 contained a crude expression of this view in an article entitled "En récompense de leur bons et loyaux services: substantielles

subventions gouvernementales à la FNSEA et au CNJA." The article then went on to claim that the FNSEA had received 890,000 francs under the pretext of vocational training but that this was really a reward for the political co-operation of the FNSEA.

To make matters worse from the MODEF point of view, this money was specifically designed to keep the FNSEA on the modernizing and liquidating path. It was a bribe to persuade the leaders of the FNSEA to sacrifice the interests of the majority of farmers to the stability of the leadership's relationship with the government. MODEF has concentrated its fire on this aspect of FNSEA policy. Betraying its members is its *raison d'être*. For example, in 1972 the FNSEA Congress adopted a series of constitutional amendments which increased the control of the Debatisse leadership over the activities of the departmental Federations and sectional organizations. According to MODEF, these changes had been made in order to permit the right-wing leadership of the FNSEA to:

s'enfoncer encore plus dans sa collaboration avec le gouvernement dans sa nouvelle offensive contre les exploitants familiaux, et en même temps elle va s'efforcer de briser dans ses rangs toute tentative de s'y opposer.(5)

The last phrase above leads us on to MODEF's final major grievance against the FNSEA; its monopoly of representation and its lack of internal democracy. Since the original nucleus of MODEF was composed of Federations which had been victims of this state of affairs, being expelled on one pretext or another, this question was bound to take on some importance in the rivalry between the two organizations. Indeed,

one could argue that one of the reasons for MODEF's style of internal democracy based on the search for unanimity is the result of unpleasant experiences as FNSEA members. It is important to note that the vast majority of those MODEF militants interviewed who had previously been members of the FNSEA stressed the impossibility of securing a hearing for a dissident line as one of the two major reasons for leaving the FNSEA (the other being the contents of FNSEA policies).

As far as the FNSEA was concerned, it saw no reason why its official monopoly of representation should not be matched by a monopoly of membership. The fact there was no legal basis for a closed shop in France was merely an unfortunate obstacle to be overcome. The FNSEA relied on various highly effective if dubious methods to press-gang the entire profession into one union. This included MODEF members since the FNSEA shared the view of certain civil servants that if MODEF was not officially recognized, it did not exist.

MODEF persistently contested both the principle of the closed shop and the means which the FNSEA employed in its effort to enforce it. By 1965, MODEF had defined its attitude to this problem:

Le bureau du MODEF s'élève avec vigueur contre la prétention de la FNSEA de percevoir une cotisation obligatoire sur tous les produits livrés par les cultivateurs qu'ils soient adhérents ou non... Il souligne que cette atteinte à la liberté syndicale qui trouve un précédent dans la Corporation Paysanne de Vichy de sinistre mémoire, ne peut se réaliser qu'avec l'accord du gouvernement, ce qui mettrait sous sa dépendance total, l'organisation qui accepte un tel financement.(6)

Since then MODEF has contested the FNSEA's various techniques of pursuing this goal. Amongst those with which MODEF had to contend were relatively benign forms such as the negotiation of special SNCF rates for FNSEA members, and more malevolent forms such as the blocking of Credit Agricole loans to non-FNSEA members. However, the most profitable and popular method was the affiliation of co-operatives to the FNSEA or its specialist organizations. The AGPB was particularly effective in this respect. After affiliation, co-operatives then levied their members to pay subscriptions, sometimes without the knowledge of the members of the co-operative.(7)

Despite MODEF's hostility to such practices, it did not launch any systematic campaigns to eradicate them until the early 1980s. Individual grievances, such as those concerning the Credit Agricole were remedied more or less effectively, but collective action against co-operative conscription was absent. It was left to individual activists to protest at co-operative AGMS. Given the shaky ground on which co-operative officials were treading, this could sometimes suffice. In 1980, the Charente Federation initiated a policy designed to turn this tactic against the FNSEA. Instead of opposing such levies, cereals farmers were advised to demand that their share of the levy be paid to MODEF's specialist cereals organization instead of to the AGPB.

Apart from MODEF's own organizational interests, there was a substantive reason behind MODEF's opposition to this artificially created unity. Alfred Nègre explained the MODEF position in the following terms:



Unité, que de crimes on commet en ton nom... La fameuse unité tant prônée par les dirigeants du syndicalisme officiel... a eu pour premier et évident résultat de renforcer sans cesse les positions de la grande propriété. Comment pourrait-il en être autrement puisque seuls ses représentants occupent les postes de direction, tiennent les leviers de commande et que seuls, ils ont accès et audience auprès des pouvoirs publics.(8)

Since then little has happened to make MODEF revise its attitudes. Nègre's remarks amount to a critique of corporatism which predates the academic debate on the subject by some 15 years. At this series of quotations suggests, MODEF's critique of corporatism has generally been reduced to an obsession with the finances of the FNSEA. However much an intellectual weakness this may appear to the observer, it proved a practical advantage to the activist. By refusing to recognize that the policy of the FNSEA represented an intellectually respectable, if unpalatable alternative, MODEF limited the damage which the continuing decline of the family farm inflicted on the morale of its activists. Reducing the policy of the FNSEA to bribery and corruption prevented doubts arising about the inevitability of the decline and the consequent logic of the FNSEA approach.

MODEF's hostility to the FNSEA is reciprocated by the FNSEA. Addressing the FNSEA Congress in 1971, Michel Debatisse defended the monopoly of representation. Debatisse began by launching an attack on MODEF for its emphasis on the negative effects of the EEC and its insistence on pricing policy as a solution to the ills of agriculture. Denouncing this attitude as "agricolisme", Debatisse claimed MODEF:

s'apparente à un courant poujadiste dont les attaches politiques, pour être opposés, n'en sont pas moins certaines... Elle porte en soi la condamnation des exploitations de type familial d'autant plus sûrement que certains de ceux qui préconisent cette politique se sont empressés de faire disparaître ce type d'exploitation dans les pays où ils ont pris le pouvoir... Quoi qu'en disent certains, l'éclatement du syndicalisme ne se ferait pas sur des bases économiques. En réalité, c'est bien sûr des bases politiques que se ferait l'éclatement du syndicalisme agricole.(9)

Pluralism would bring about a situation in which would occur "la création de syndicats annexes ou succursales des partis politiques.(10) Rather than make farmers more independent of the state, it would increase the influence of the state over agriculture and would prevent farm unionism from dealing as an equal with the economic institutions of agriculture.

This speech contains two of the three main themes of the FNSEA critique of MODEF. The connection between MODEF and the PCF was alleged to be such that MODEF defended the interests of the party rather than those of farmers. This view has been constantly re-iterated by FNSEA spokesmen at all levels and has constituted one of their favourite electoral campaign issues. From a less partisan point of view, the second theme is more important. FNSEA leaders have been even more insistent that the break up of the monopoly would damage the interests of farmers by reducing the influence of agricultural unionism as a whole:

On tient beaucoup à ce que le syndicalisme reste unitaire. Ça nous paraît très important pour la défense des agriculteurs, ça nous paraît plus efficace. S'il y a plusieurs syndicats on a la conviction que les revendications perdraient de leur efficacité. Quand on se compare avec les syndicats ouvriers, on se rend compte que les syndicats regrettent de ne pas avoir une unité d'action et ils sont souvent en train d'essayer de s'associer.(11)

Indeed, the leaders of the UDSEA in the Charente were well placed to discover the truth of this claim since, as Bélanger points out, the MODEF-FNSEA divide meant that farm unionism did not receive the same degree of attention as the administration paid to it in more homogeneous departments.(12)

It is the final element in the critique which is the most sophisticated. MODEF's emphasis on agitation rather than negotiation is deeply resented by the FNSEA:

Pour nous, servir les intérêts des agriculteurs, c'est les aider à faire face à leurs problèmes du moment et à préparer l'avenir. Alors passer son temps à exciter les gens en permanence, sans leur proposer en même temps quelque chose de constructif, nous apparaît pas la bonne méthode.(13)

MODEF was therefore guilty of a demagogic policy, opposing change and demanding that the state protect present and untenable positions. Or, as one FNSEA official described MODEF's tactics: "Vous travaillez bien, continuez, nous allons vous défendre."(14) This made MODEF incapable of intervening in the most important areas. The first of these was the

technical and economic education and organization of farmers. The FNSEA defended itself from the bribery accusation by pointing out that state money was attributed on the basis of actions carried out in these fields. For instance, MODEF's claims that the Charente Chamber of Agriculture agricultural development service (SUAD) was being used for UDSEA purposes were dismissed by Mangon on the grounds that it was the UDSEA who was providing more assistance to the SUAD than vice versa.(15)

On a essayé d'être présent sur le terrain en répondant aux besoins... Par exemple, le service TVA, le service vendangeur, le service de comptabilité et les réunions de formation... on essaie davantage de faire des actions de ce genre, de former, plutôt que mener une action de polémique.(16)

The other requirement which the FNSEA alleged MODEF failed to fulfil was the need to engage in permanent negotiations with the administration. This meant that MODEF could not represent farmers properly because it was incapable of providing the kinds of dossiers needed to persuade the administration to adopt particular policies. Unlike MODEF, the FNSEA has always recognized the distinction between government and administration and the consequent necessity to deal with both. As Mangon pointed out, the 1980 Loi d'Orientation was only a rough guide to the future of agricultural policy.

Il y a une loi mais la loi c'est une chose, son application est une autre. La loi prévoit des schémas directeurs pour chaque département. Mais ces schémas, il va falloir les bâtir. Il y aura des choix à faire département par département et qui ne seront pas forcément les mêmes en Charente que dans la Somme. Puis après, il faut veiller à l'application tous les jours et tous les ans.(17)

In a sense, the FNSEA view of MODEF is the mirror image of the MODEF view of the FNSEA. Unlike rival trade unions, such as the CFDT and the CGT, neither organization was prepared to admit that the other had any legitimate right to exist. Both made virtues of their necessities - the FNSEA stressing the importance of negotiations and MODEF its independence from the state. However, the different positions occupied by the FNSEA and MODEF in the agri-complex meant that whilst the interests of MODEF resided in an united front policy, the FNSEA strategy could be summed up by one of its officials in these terms: "Nous cherchons à avoir le moins à faire avec le MODEF".(18) To what extent is the barrier between the two organizations at a national level reflected in the departments? Before examining this question, it is necessary to consider MODEF's conception of unity in action.

MODEF's strategy relied on two not always compatible principles. The first was an insistence on the possibility and desirability of co-operation with some of the FDSEAs and the specialist organizations of the FNSEA. The second was the idea that MODEF should act as a spur to the FNSEA, pressurizing it into taking action to defend the family farm. Frederic Lindenstaedt defined this role in the following terms:

Nous préparons les esprits pour démarrer. Comme nous on est devant, la FNSEA n'est pas loin. Elle ne peut pas, elle ne veut pas se laisser dépasser. C'est le rôle d'aiguillon du MODEF. L'aiguillon est un baton pour piquer le boeuf. Notre rôle, c'est de piquer la FNSEA pour qu'elle se mette dans le mouvement.(19)

MODEF's emphasis on collaboration with the FNSEA on specific grievances was not simply a question of tactics. As we have seen, MODEF's

attitude towards the class divisions in agriculture has been more one of sorrow rather than anger and the responsibility for the division of agricultural unionism has been placed firmly on the shoulders of the FNSEA. Given this nostalgia for "l'unité paysanné": "Celui qui, aux yeux de l'opinion agricole, porte la responsabilité de la rupture, risque de perdre toute influence, tout moyen d'action pour avoir violé un tabou."(20) It was therefore in MODEF's interests to maintain goodwill by a constant effort to be seen to co-operate wherever possible.

Whilst the cattle prod theory has remained intact, MODEF's attitude towards the FDSEAs has undergone some drastic changes, changes resulting from the gradual affirmation of MODEF's position as a solid organization. Between 1959 and 1980, MODEF made a clear distinction between the FNSEA leadership and the departmental Federations opposed to the leadership. Alfred Nègre warned the delegates to the first Congress in 1965 that they should not:

confondre les dirigeants de ces organisations (FNSEA/CNJA) avec leurs éléments constitutifs qui sont, pour la plupart, nos semblables... Il est par conséquent infiniment nécessaire à mes yeux, chaque fois que vous aurez l'occasion de porter les débats sur ce point, de distinguer soigneusement les dirigeants avec les troupes qui constituent ces organisations.(21)

With this idea in mind, MODEF went to greater lengths to appeal to FNSEA dissidents. In its early phase as a loosely-knit pressure group seeking to force the FNSEA to change its policies, MODEF was careful to avoid placing the dissident FDSEAs in an awkward position. At the first AGM in 1960, it was made clear that there was no objection to dual

membership of MODEF and the FNSEA, either by individuals or FDSEAs. A deliberate decision was taken to avoid rigid organization. Anarchy was something of a positive virtue in this case:

Pour atteindre ses buts, il faut renforcer l'organisation du Mouvement, tout en lui gardant une forme de structure souple qui permette d'y adhérer quiconque désire défendre efficacement l'exploitation familial, quelle que soit l'organisation à laquelle il appartient déjà.(22)

Indeed several delegates warned against setting up any kind of formal organization.

In the various campaigns of agitation which took place in the early 1960s, constant stress was laid on the need to persuade or oblige the FDSEAs into action:

Dans ces actions, il nous est possible d'avoir à nos côtés des hommes qui, même s'ils ne partagent pas notre point de vue sur les dirigeants de la FNSEA et même leur reste plus ou moins fidèles, n'en voient pas moins le danger qui les menace...

wrote Mineau in September 1960. This advice was repeated the following year. "Dans cette lutte nous ne devons négliger aucune possibilité d'action commune avec ceux qui restent fidèles à la FNSEA..."(23)

However, as it became clear that the Debatisse leadership, the Fifth Republic and MODEF were here to stay, MODEF began to take a less friendly attitude towards the FNSEA dissidents and other farmers likely

to respond to MODEF appeals. Rather than treat these people as potential allies, by the early 1970s MODEF viewed them as potential members. In 1972, MODEF called on the dissident Federations and individual members of the FNSEA to come over to MODEF. MODEF argued that it was now clear that it was impossible for the family farm sector to influence the direction of the FNSEA:

Dans ces conditions, il apparait encore plus clairement que les petits et moyens exploitants n'ont rien à faire dans cette galère. C'est la raison pour laquelle nous devons montrer à ceux qui y restent encore que leur intérêt est de rejoindre le MODEF et d'y mener le combat pour faire échec à ceux qui organisent leur disparition.(24)

Nevertheless, MODEF was obliged to qualify this attitude and continue to distinguish between the FNSEA majority and the dissidents. It would have been self-destructive sectarianism to refuse to associate with such dissidents when they were advocating similar policies to those of MODEF:

Nous ne ferons exceptions que pour les organisations qui, bravant les interdicts de la FNSEA, poursuivront sans défaillance leur action pour la défense de l'exploitation familiale. Nous continuerons à mettre tout en oeuvre pour mener le bon combat avec ces organisations.(25)

This attitude prevailed during the rest of the 1970s. For example, in 1975, MODEF took care to distinguish between the FNSEA and certain of its Federations in the conflict over the proposed Giscardian alterations to the tenant-sharecropper regulations.



Once MODEF moved to yet another higher stage of organization through official recognition in 1981, its attitude towards its sometime allies in the FNSEA became much harder. Shortly before the elections, MODEF called into question the motives of the FNSEA dissidents, as well as other oppositional tendencies:

En fin de compte, nous pouvons nous demander si ces soi-disant opposants à la FNSEA n'ont pas comme objectif d'empêcher tout simplement les agriculteurs mécontents de l'activité du syndicat de Francois Guillaume de rejoindre le MODEF.(26)

Once official recognition was obtained in June 1981, MODEF was able to call on the FNSEA dissidents to sever their ties with the FNSEA and bring their supporters and resources over to MODEF. This change of attitude was dictated by several considerations. Firstly, MODEF's interests as an increasingly structured organization meant that the dissident FDSEAs, from MODEF's point of view, would serve a more useful purpose in MODEF than in the FNSEA. Secondly, as far as MODEF was concerned, the longer the dissidents remained in the FNSEA, the less influence they appeared to have. The removal of Paul Le Saux and Pierre Abégueille from the leadership of the FNSEA's Tenants Section in 1980 and their replacement by officials more acceptable to the FNSEA majority only reinforced this view. Thirdly, the presence of the dissidents within the FNSEA was seen as legitimizing the right-wing leadership, a factor which became particularly important after the FNSEA launched its campaign against the Mauroy government. The presence of socialists and communists within the FNSEA allowed the leadership to deny that their actions were politically motivated. Finally, with official recognition, the material constraints on the dissident Federations were loosened. In

the past, any FDSEA which went too far in its defiance of the national leadership risked disciplinary sanctions and possible expulsion which would place them in the same position as MODEF itself, officially ignored and deprived of the state's material support. With MODEF's recognition, an FDSEA could transfer itself to MODEF without incurring such risks. The benefits to MODEF in terms of increased strength and resources made the capture of these FDSEAs a possible as well as a desirable goal.

What has this concern for co-operation with the FDSEAs meant in practice? At the most elementary level, MODEF's willingness to place the contents of policy before organizational affiliations has been demonstrated by its decision not to set up a Federation in those departments where the policies of the FDSEA were acceptable to MODEF. These departments are the Allier, Dordogne, Lot-et-Garonne, Ariège, Alpes-Maritimes, Haute-Vienne, Haute-Garonne and Creuse. To some extent, this was really a euphemism for the control of the FDSEA by activists of acceptable political organizations, primarily but not exclusively the PCF. The leader of the Creuse Federation was, for instance, the socialist Roland Viel. Another case exists of MODEF deciding to leave a department to its own devices in the Puy-de-Dôme. Here MODEF was motivated by a desire to leave the field open to a Federation whose merits lay in its hostility to one of its natives, Michael Debatisse, and its resistance to his attempts to impose his clientele as the leadership of the Federation.

Certain of these Federations were and are closer to MODEF than others. The outstanding example is the Alpes-Maritimes FDSEA whose close association with MODEF extended to paying a subscription to MODEF and

participating in MODEF's south-eastern regional committee. Co-operation with these Federations was obviously limited by the fact there was no MODEF Federation in these departments. Co-operation could only take place at the regional level, a level at which MODEF has failed to construct strong organization.

Nevertheless, more positive forms of co-operation occurred in the various regional groupings such as the Comité d'Agen (covering southwestern departments), the Comité de Redon (linking the departments of the west) and above all the Comité de Guerët in which the departments of the centre-west associate. The Comité de Guerët, as befitting its longer history, is the most institutionalized of these departments. Though MODEF has played an active role in the Comité de Guerët, it has been one of the areas in which co-operation and the cattle prod have proved to be in conflict with each other. According to MODEF, the problem with the Comité was that:

Nous n'ignorons pas que parmi les Federations d'exploitants qui le composent, trop d'entre elles sont liées aux dirigeants de la Federation nationale et ne marche que sous la pression des cultivateurs de leur département.(27)

19 years later, speaking as a vice president of the Comité de Guerët, Raymond Mineau made it clear that the MODEF view had scarcely changed. "Le Comité de Guerët est un comité d'action et de compromis."(28) Mineau described his role and that of the other MODEF representatives as one which constantly obliged them to take the initiative, attempting to persuade the FDSEAs represented (whose activities were constrained by the national leadership) to take action. Despite these problems, MODEF

has always regarded the Comité de Guerët as a useful body as a focus of opposition to the FNSEA leadership since combined action, when it occurs, carries more weight than isolated protests by either MODEF, the FDSEAs or by individual departments. At the same time, MODEF's cattle prod theory meant that it did not always wait for the Comité to decide what to do, neither did it respect majority decisions against taking action. In effect, despite its emphasis on unity, MODEF has had a take-it-or-leave-it attitude towards co-operation with the FDSEAs. If its terms were accepted, MODEF was happy to do business with them, if not it continued on its path.

At the departmental level, this primacy of the cattle prod over co-operation was not quite so clear cut. In certain departments, the FDSEA and the MODEF Federation were very close allies. The Alpes de Haute Provence was the classic example. Between 1967-79, MODEF and the FDSEA put forward a joint slate of candidates in every Chamber of Agriculture election, generally obtaining well over ninety per cent of the vote. This can partly be explained by the department's political make-up since the strong MRG presence is uncharacteristic in Provence. MRG leaders played an important role both in the wider political life of the department and in its agricultural politics. Bridging the gap between the PS and PCF, the MRG helped to hold the alliance together. But the political considerations behind the alliance were strongly reinforced by the drastic decline in the number of farmers in the department. This led to a realization that it was extremely difficult to sustain two separate farm unions. In departments where such alliances were not underpinned by this consideration, such as the Aude or the Gironde, this form of co-operation had a much shorter life span.

However, in the majority of departments, to the extent that there was co-operation between the two organizations, this was limited to temporary agreement on specific campaigns. For example, the censure motion debate of November 1964 against the Pompidou government was preceded by a series of protests to individual MPs in which many MODEF and FNSEA Federations combined.(29) In Brittany, May 1968 was characterized by co-operation between the two farm organizations as well as with the trade unions.(30) The mid-1970s drought led many Federations, particularly in the south west, to cooperate with each other in agitating for adequate compensation.(31) A similar development occurred in the Mediterranean coastal departments in the 'Opération Région Morte' of August 1976.(32)

Paradoxically, it is the departments where such collaboration would have had the greatest effect in which it proved least possible. In the departments where MODEF and the FNSEA were fairly evenly matched, such as the Landes, Charente and Vaucluse, relations between the two organizations were at their worst. The fact that MODEF were serious rivals embittered relations between them. Indeed "relations" is an inappropriate word in this context since they were more or less non-existent. Since the continuing pre-eminence of the FNSEA depended so much on its monopoly of representation and its greater capacity to provide services, every effort was made to keep the debate at this level. By moving on to a more ideological level, the FNSEA would have placed itself on much weaker ground. One way of preventing this from happening was to ignore MODEF as far as possible. Where popular pressure proved too great to maintain this attitude, little was done to bridge the gap between the two organizations.

MODEF's difficulties in this respect were demonstrated in an incident in the Vaucluse in 1966. Faced with problems in disposing of the year's fruit harvest, MODEF's departmental committee met and proposed a temporary alliance with the FDSEA on the basis of a four-point programme. These were: an immediate ban on fruit imports; state purchase of excess produce for distribution to schools, hospitals, etc; exemption from social security contributions for the year and the creation of a product board to regulate the markets.(33) This was followed by a series of meetings between the Federations from which emerged a consensus on objectives but complete disagreement on means. MODEF then went ahead and organized its own demonstration, expressing its regrets that agreement had not been reached. At the same time, it claimed that the FDSEA's decision not to endorse the demonstration did not mean that it was opposed to such a protest.(34)

Conscious of the need to maintain the credibility of its "unity" discourse, the reluctance of most FDSEAs to cooperate with MODEF often required MODEF initiatives. MODEF made it its business to participate in protests organized by their rivals. At times this unwanted support was rejected, thus reducing MODEF from the status of an extremely junior partner to an even more humiliating position as a total outsider. For instance, when the Vaucluse FDSEA president was being tried for offences arising out of his union's protest activities, MODEF participated in a picket of the court. FDSEA officials then tried to remove the MODEF banners present.(35) Though this attempt failed, due to the opposition of many FDSEA members present, this served as a forceful reminder to MODEF that it was not engaged in unity of action with the FDSEA so much as committing itself to subordination in action.

This state of affairs suggests that the cattle prod theory and the emphasis on unity in action were not always compatible. Knowing that MODEF's object was to persuade or oblige the FNSEA to take the most vigorous action possible, FNSEA leaders had little incentive to launch campaigns over which they would have had to share control with MODEF. Neither did they want to allow MODEF to take the credit for initiating any actions which might have eventually proved necessary.

On the other hand, the same fear also worked against MODEF in cases where the cattle prod was used with success, or where popular discontent was so great that the FNSEA had no alternative but to take the initiative in organizing the protests. In such cases, MODEF was again placed in a state of subordination. In order to demonstrate its identity and to make use of the climate of agitation, MODEF was obliged to attempt to escalate the demands. This, naturally, threatened the credibility of its commitment to unity in action.

A classic example of this occurred in the winter and spring of 1980-81 in the Charente. The Cognacais was convulsed by the implications of the European Court of Justice decision declaring that discriminatory taxation of domestic and EEC alcoholic beverages was illegal. In response, the French government proposed, in Article Four of the 1981 Budget, to raise taxes on cognac to the same level as those on imported products. Competition from whisky manufacturers was seen as the main source of concern. By the time Article Four was debated in the National Assembly at the end of October 1980, the political and economic leaders of the department had all expressed their varying degrees of opposition to it. Throughout November and December, the UDSEA prepared the extra-parliamentary resistance to Article Four. MODEF was the only

organization connected with the cognac industry to stand aloof from this agitation. In a report to the Charente Federation Executive at the beginning of December, Mineau only mentioned Article Four in passing, concentrating instead on the difficulties of marketing cognac under existing taxation and the threat posed by the proposed liberalization of the BNIC.(36).

As the Parliamentary struggle against Article Four was lost on 17 and 18 December, the UDSEA, the specialist organizations of the industry and many of the region's mayors met at Cognac to decide upon the next step. This is precisely what they failed to do, disagreeing over whether there should be a simple refusal to pay the new taxes, an attempt to secure compensation from the FORMA, or an appeal to the government to reconsider Article Four. The last and weakest option won out. At this stage, MODEF, in the person of Mineau, made its first public statement on the issue, two months after it had become a matter of widespread concern. Mineau explained the Parliamentary defeat as the result of disunity within the region (one of the signs being the exclusion of MODEF from the planning meetings, although MODEF had not demonstrated much interest in the issue as yet) and because of the way the dispute had been limited to a faction fight between the pastis and eaux-de-vie lobbies.

On ignore superbement le vin, il nous manque les bataillons du Midi. La seule solution valable était non pas une bagarre entre eaux-de-vie et anis pour savoir qui paierait mais celle préconisée par le MODEF: refus pur et simple et de toute augmentation des droits de nos vins et eaux-de-vie et de toute réduction des droits de nos concurrents. C'est d'ailleurs le meilleur moyen d'amener le Cour de justice à revenir sur ses positions.(37)



Only with the coming of the new year did cognac producers finally resort to direct action, several weeks after the mayors had begun a not particularly effective administrative strike. A mass demonstration was scheduled for Cognac on 23 January. Despite its exclusion from the group of farm and industrial organizations behind the demonstration, MODEF decided to participate, as its unitary emphasis obliged it to do. Nevertheless, MODEF differentiated itself from this group by specifically condemning the compensation option, an option still in favour amongst certain groups, such as the UDSEA. According to MODEF, compensation would be withdrawn as soon as the government had disarmed the opposition to Article Four.(38)

The Cognac demonstration proved to be the high point of this developing regional unity. MODEF were represented on the speakers platform and in the delegation which was received at the sub-prefecture. Support for a proposal that the industry should refuse to levy the new taxes was forthcoming from all groups involved. This proposal, however, did not come from MODEF but from the Syndicat Viticole of the Charente-Maritime, a body representing both farmers and merchants.(39)

From this point on, the paths of MODEF and the UDSEA diverged. Whilst the UDSEA concentrated on negotiating a settlement to the Article Four dispute, MODEF attempted to widen the basis of the campaign. When the government announced its proposals for compensation on 28 January, MODEF was amongst the most virulent critics of the scheme, claiming that the level of compensation was inadequate and expressing doubts as to where the money would end up. It also insinuated that the official organizations rather than farmers would be the prime beneficiaries. This was hardly designed to facilitate co-operation with the UDSEA.(40)

On 1 February, the new taxes and the anti-tax campaign came into force. Although MODEF was a firm supporter of the refusal to levy the new taxes, it did little to cement the alliance visible on 23 January. Its specialist organization, the Comité de Défense de la Viticulture Charentaise, met in Cognac on 5 February. The debate treated the taxation as a secondary issue and stressed the difficulties of marketing and the need to ensure the application of BNIC decisions. It was decided to denounce the merchants, allies two weeks previously, and their "collaborators" in the BNIC who were trying to deregulate the cognac market. The CDVC therefore decided to protest against the BNIC (and by implication the UDSEA), the merchants and the taxes by demonstrating outside the next meeting of the BNIC on 25 February.(41)

After this demonstration took place, the next MODEF initiative was on similar lines. The CDVC met again at the end of March and once again placed the Article Four issue in the context of the wider problems of the industry. This time it decided to appeal to the other farm organizations to agree a plan of action aimed at resolving these problems. As the Charente Libre summed up the MODEF attitude: "Le MODEF prêche l'unité mais fait cavalier seul".(42) In other words, MODEF was attempting to use its cattle prod whilst being in a state of subordination in action. In order to transform that situation into unity in action, it had to resort to tactics which undermined the possibility of doing so.

The contradictions of the MODEF strategy were not the only reasons why co-operation between MODEF and FNSEA Federations should have been so limited. FNSEA dissidents were obliged to tread a narrow path, appreciating that there were limits to the degree of autonomy which the

national leadership would tolerate. The FNSEA's official monopoly of representation gave the national officials a great deal of leverage over the departmental organizations. Fontaine has provided a case study of the way in which this was done. In order to be successful in its dealings with local and national administration, an FDSEA required the backing of the national organization. Fontaine concludes that the FNSEA was only willing to provide this support:

dans la mesure que la federation departementale demanderèsse ne lui apparait pas comme une adversaire irréductible; les bonnes relations de la FNSEA avec les pouvoirs publics peuvent faire avancer ou oublier un dossier.(43)

Few Federations were willing to jeopardize their relationship with the FNSEA for the sake of co-operation with MODEF.

But what allowed the FNSEA to impose its will on dissident Federations? In the final analysis, this depended on the asymmetry between MODEF and the FNSEA. It was not a case of two rival organizations competing for the ear of the government and administration. The difference between the corporatist link between the state and the FNSEA and MODEF's ghettoization drastically reduced the possibility of finding any common ground. Whilst the FNSEA enjoyed privileged access to the state, MODEF's attempt to secure access inevitably challenged the FNSEA's special relationship with the state. In practice, this meant the FNSEA was an obstacle rather than a potential ally which in turn involved MODEF in incessant attacks on the FNSEA. The latter was therefore able to blame MODEF for the division of the agricultural community and therefore refuse MODEF proposals for unity in action with a clear

conscience and with a reasonable degree of credibility. MODEF was therefore saddled with the reputation of the splitter, even in the eyes of many who opposed the policies of the majority of the FNSEA leadership.

## 2. THE CENTRE NATIONAL DES JEUNES AGRICULTEURS (CNJA)

Since MODEF always believed that the CNJA was little more than a creature of the FNSEA, it's analysis of the two organizations was similar. The only significant difference is that MODEF hostility to the CNJA was even more extreme. MODEF's critique of the CNJA was based on its dependence on state finance and its wholehearted commitment to agricultural modernization. These two themes were united in an attack on the CNJA made in MODEF's early days, themes which persisted throughout MODEF's existence. Referring to the CNJA's demands for radical reforms in agricultural policy in the early 1960s, MODEF claimed that:

le CNJA voulant aller plus vite que son patron. Parler de patron n'est pas trop dire. Chacun sait que les seuls cotisations de ses adhérents sont loin de couvrir les dépenses engagées par cette organisation... Se placant de la sorte à la remorque du gouvernement et les principaux responsables se constituant de solides assises financières, il faut bien obéir au grand chef.(44)

This kind of accusation was made frequently for the next twenty years.(45)

The CNJA's commitment to modernization and the managerial approach to farming incensed MODEF. Modernization was taken to mean the development of capitalist agriculture at the expense of the vast majority of farmers. Unlike the FNSEA, the CNJA did not face the constraints which the heterogeneity of its membership imposed on FNSEA leaders. This was particularly true after the defeat of the Left at the 1970 Congress, after which the CNJA became a much more ideologically homogeneous group.

MODEF therefore did not entertain much hope of creating alliances with the CDJAs. Given the degree of homogeneity, there was little point in appealing to activists over the heads of the leaders. Furthermore, the ageing of the farming profession involved a constant decline in the CNJA's potential membership. Since MODEF believed that the CNJA was more a manifestation of the state than a reflection of popular support by young farmers, there was little point in dealing with it.(46)

MODEF's hostility to the CNJA eventually crystallized over the issue of access to agricultural training colleges. For most of the period under consideration, the CNJA was the only organization permitted to enter these establishments to put its case. Future farmers were therefore not made aware that there was an alternative to CNJA, and hence eventual FNSEA, membership. In the late 1970s MODEF set about remedying this state of affairs. Faced with the CNJA's resistance, the success of the FNJ campaign to secure access depended on a favourable combination of MODEF strength and the willingness of college officials to allow such access. Given the CNJA-FNSEA-state connection, it is not as surprising as it may appear on first sight that this campaign was more successful in the mainly Catholic private sector than in the state sector.(47)

MODEF's strategy towards the CNJA has therefore been one of direct confrontation rather than the combination of confrontation and attempted co-operation which characterized its relations with the FNSEA. The limited degree of co-operation between FDSEAs and MODEF Federations was not paralleled by any such alliances between FNJ Federations and CDJAs. This does not imply that MODEF recognized that the CNJA was autonomous from the FNSEA. As far as MODEF was concerned, the CNJA was only the clearest expression of the real objectives of the FNSEA leaders. In this light, the creation of the FNJ was not an implicit recognition of a genuine autonomy, but an expression of the need to use different tactics to combat the different style adopted by the CNJA.

### 3. THE PAYSAN TRAVAILLEUR TENDENCY

Though MODEF likes to regard itself as the only opposition to the FNSEA and its allies, the reality is somewhat different since it has had to face opposition from both Left and Right. On the Left, the defeat of the CNJA minority in 1970 was the signal for an emergence of an agricultural hard left, the Paysan Travailleur tendency.(PT)

PT has had an unstable, tempestuous relationship with the Parti Socialiste Unifié (PSU), in which both parties have had a certain influence on the other. Perhaps the most peculiar aspect of PT is its determination not to have its suggestions adopted by political parties or the government. Despite its determined efforts to avoid "récupération" by political parties, that is the association of PT, either organizationally or ideologically with parties, it has not been particularly successful in this respect. Not only has it attracted the

interest of the PSU, the PS and even the European Commission which has expressed interest in its ideas for energy savings and the disposal of EEC surpluses through import substitution.(48)

Coupled with this is a rejection of the notablist and clientelistic practices to which other farm organizations have resorted with varying degrees of enthusiasm. "Comme les trapézistes travaillent sans filet, nous travaillons sans notables et nous en assumons les risques."(49)

PT has a very distinct analysis of the problems of the non-capitalist farming sector. In opposition to the official view, PT denounces the expansionist conceptions which have dominated French and European agricultural policy-making. Rather than encourage greater investment and productivity, and hence surpluses, the goal of agricultural policy should be to ensure the survival of the non-capitalist sector. Across the board price increases should be replaced by guaranteed prices for fixed quotas. PT has also distinguished itself from other farm organizations through its insistence that agro-industry, the prime beneficiary of expansionism, should be treated as an enemy. In particular, PT refuses to distinguish between private and co-operative firms.

This analysis provides the basis for the PT critique of MODEF. PT claimed that the problem with MODEF was its corporatist ideology, in the sense of being concerned only with the interests of farmers. Because of its failure to analyze the connection between agriculture, the domestic economy and the international economy, it was committed to defending a type of agriculture which could not be defended. In PT's view there was no future for the individually-owned and operated family farm if the

present expansionism continued. Since MODEF denied that surpluses existed, it was supporting a less systematic but still dangerous productivist model of agriculture.(50)

MODEF's view of PT was been one of condescension. Unlike in the case of the right-wing threat from the FFA, MODEF realized the potential dangers which PT presented to its monopoly of opposition. As has been seen in Chapter 4, the emergence of PT was one of the considerations involved in the decision to set up the FNJ. However, once it was realized that PT presented no electoral threat to MODEF and had only a limited impact amongst MODEF activists, MODEF's criticisms of PT portrayed its activists as a group of mistaken idealists. The basic reproach was that PT was incapable of translating its theoretical analysis of the problems facing farmers into practical suggestions for remedial action. After the CNJA Congress of Blois where the future PT activists narrowly failed to take control of the CNJA, MODEF criticized them for their abstraction:

Le contre rapport est trop remplie de phraséologie pour être convainquant. Se proposer de convaincre les jeunes et les paysans en général des vices du "capitalisme" et des chances qu'offrirait une société plus socialiste est peut être plus genereuse, mais quelles solutions concrètes propose le contre rapport pour l'immédiat... (51)

Since then, the official MODEF view has scarcely changed as Frederic Lindenstaedt made the same point more elegantly in 1980. "Ils s'envolent dans les nuages"(52)



This gap between the two organizations was widened by the fact that official condescension was often replaced by overt hostility on the part of the MODEF activists who were most involved in dealings with PT. This was particularly clear in Brittany since this is the region in which PT had the greatest success. MODEF Breton activists were much more likely to take a much less tolerant view of PT. One MODEF official in the Côtes du Nord expressed his contempt for PT. "Des bourgeois un peu révoltés, pas révolutionnaires je le dis bien, parce qu'ils n'ont pas fait fortune. Ils retourneront à leurs anciens amours."(53) This is of course a more traditional response of the official Left to their challengers on the far left.

In consequence, there has been little co-operation between MODEF and PT. This was due more to mutual incomprehension than to enmity. Paradoxically, PT is the most politicized farm organization but at the same time it has been the one most concerned with the economic dimension of class conflict in agriculture. PT has combined a vague commitment to structural political change with a constant search for economic solutions which, however radical they may seem, remain reformist since they do not threaten the state. MODEF, on the other hand, has combined a more concrete and limited form of political change with a blatant disregard for the economic limitations imposed by the capitalist economy.

In practice, therefore, MODEF and PT activists were only able to co-operate on particular cases rather than issues. When dealing with individual or local problems, such as resisting evictions, co-operation was possible. Issues on which the wider views of the two organizations impinged offered little hope of successful alliances. The failure of attempts to arrive at an agreed strategy over the EEC milk levy was a case in point.

Given PT's desire to steer clear of the political parties, it is ironic that its main impact on MODEF has been to restrict the latter's influence on the PS. MODEF attempts to win support for its policies within the PS were hindered by the fact that an alternative body of theory existed, an alternative which had more appeal to the PS "énarques" than that of MODEF. As the next chapter demonstrates, if the substance of PS agricultural policy in the late 1970s was similar to that of the MODEF, the logic behind the respective policies, the modes of thought which they revealed and the language in which they were expressed were very different. MODEF's relative weakness within the PS apparatus can therefore be partially explained by the existence of PT.

#### 4. THE FEDERATION FRANCAISE DE L'AGRICULTURE

In terms of electoral competition, opposition to the FNSEA from the right has had a much more severe effect on MODEF than has the far left opposition. The Federation Française de l'Agriculture (FFA) was created after the withdrawal of the FDSEA of Indre-et-Loire from the FNSEA in 1970. As a recrudescence of agrarian Poujadism, its influence has remained confined to western France, with a few exceptions such as the Poujadist and CID-UNATI stronghold of the Isère. The founders of the FFA were motivated by the belief that the FNSEA was not sufficiently vigorous in its defence of agricultural interests. Along with the state, the FNSEA was engaged in subordinating agriculture to industry and undermining the political and moral basis of conservative France. It is this refusal to relate agriculture to the rest of the economy and society which distinguishes the FFA from all the agricultural unions. For example, in 1981, the other organizations were all united in

demanding price rises of 15.3% in order to maintain incomes. Only the FFA dissented, calling for increases in real income to be assured by a 25% rise.(54)

This tunnel vision was reflected in MODEF criticism of the FFA. On the one hand, its promises were demagogic and could only lead to cynicism and despair. On the other, MODEF claimed that the FFA was an instrument of the state:

Devant la perte d'audience de la FNSEA, le gouvernement essaie en sous main d'implanter la FFA. La FFA vise manifestement à concentrer l'attention de petits et moyens exploitants sur un danger imaginaire tandis qu'en s'opposant à ce que les grands exploitants supportent des charges compatibles avec leurs revenus, elle favorise la concentration capitaliste des terres et de la production agricole. C'est le même but que poursuit la FNSEA par d'autres moyens. Il y a donc entre la FFA et la FNSEA division de travail dans le but de favoriser la politique agricole du gouvernement...(55)

However, MODEF did not adopt this position from the beginning of the FFA's existence. It had watched the creation of the FFA with equanimity, assuming that a right-wing opposition would only create problems for the FNSEA rather than MODEF. It was only after MODEF had realized that the FFA posed a greater threat to MODEF than it did to the FNSEA that the conspiracy theory was put forward.

MODEF has admitted the electoral damage which the FFA has inflicted upon it. Lindenstaedt explained what had occurred:

La FFA a effectivement récupéré une partie des électeurs d'opposition qui votait pour le MODEF auparavant parce que c'était la seule opposition... Le pouvoir politique n'a pas pu laisser ce bénéfice au MODEF. Quand la FFA s'est présenté avec son programme corporatiste et a participé a la campagne anti-MODEF, il y a une partie des gens, qui ont voté MODEF, qui sont revenu à leur façon de penser et leur façon de voter précédent.(56)

The election results for the Chamber of Agriculture constituencies in western France tell an eloquent story. In virtually every constituency in which the MODEF slate was confronted by FNSEA and FFA slates, it was beaten into third place. For example, in 1970, MODEF won thirty-one per cent of the vote in the Indre-et-Loire constituency of Tours. With the presence of the FFA in 1976, this proportion fell to twelve per cent. The gap between MODEF results in such departments in 1970 and those of 1974 (the first elections contested by the FFA) was a major shock. MODEF candidates in the Isère in 1970 obtained an average of 26.5%. The corresponding figure in 1974 was 12.5%. In Loire Atlantique, the MODEF share fell from 20% to 7.5%. Most spectacular of all was the collapse of the MODEF vote in Vendée from forty-seven to twelve per cent. Only in the Morbihan constituency of Pontivy did MODEF manage to beat the FFA into third place. The pattern was repeated in the 1976 and 1979 elections, leaving MODEF with a large hole in its organization in the Loire Valley and in the Pays de la Loire region.

The fact that MODEF became convinced that the primary purpose of the FFA was to undermine the MODEF monopoly of opposition rather than the FNSEA monopoly of representation prevented the establishment of any systematic contacts between the two organizations. This was reinforced by the

chasm between their platforms. Despite the differences which exist between MODEF and FNSEA, they nevertheless live in the same mental century. The FFA does not. Therefore there is no common discourse, which is the minimum requirement for any relationship, whether of conflict or co-operation.

#### 5. THE CHAMBERS OF AGRICULTURE

As the Chambers of Agriculture are the official voice of agriculture as a whole, every farm and other form of agricultural organization has a political and bureaucratic interest in maximizing its influence within them. Article 506 of the Code Rural defines the role of the Chambers. Their function is to give government and administration advice on agricultural issues. They are also allowed to involve themselves in initiatives designed to promote agricultural development.

The Chambers represent all those involved in agriculture, farmers, landowners, labourers, and the recognized agricultural organizations. Their legal status is that of an "Etablissement Public". Their relationship with the state is thus legally defined rather than being determined by mutual advantage, as in the case of the FNSEA. In order to carry out their functions, Article 507 of the Code Rural allows them to employ a large bureaucracy and to finance their activities by taxing the owners and users of agricultural land. The official status of the Chambers at the national level and control of resources at the departmental level has made the battle for influence within the Chambers a matter of vital importance for the FNSEA.(57)

The efforts of the FNSEA in this direction have been rewarded with a high degree of success. The FNSEA succeeded in maintaining control of virtually every departmental Chamber, the exception being the Landes between 1964 and 1979. Its dominance in the Assemblée Permanente des Presidents des Chambres d'Agriculture (APPCA) was demonstrated by the fact that not only did its nominees occupy the principal posts in the APPCA but the two organizations shared the same headquarters building in Paris.

If the FNSEA dominance of the APPCA strengthened the political influence of the FNSEA, it was its control over the departmental Chambers which proved of most assistance in maintaining its influence over farmers. MODEF never ceased to complain that the resources of the Chambers were being misappropriated for the benefit of the FNSEA. In the more extreme cases, MODEF claimed that farmers were refused access to Chamber services unless they paid FNSEA subscriptions. Less dramatically, MODEF denounced the close links between Chamber services, such as the SUADs, and the FDSEAs, claiming that the former were paying their staff to act as agents of the latter. Similarly, MODEF accused the Chambers of subsidizing the FNSEA, either through clandestine payments or through the purchase of excessive numbers of FNSEA publications. The latter was particularly galling to MODEF given its limited access to the means of communication.

The FNSEA reply to allegations about the links between Chamber staff and the FDSEAs has already been seen above. It would appear that there was some substance to the MODEF claims. A Cour des Comptes report in 1971 revealed that the auditors had discovered certain irregularities. They found that between the Chambers and the FNSEA, there existed "des

situations contestables et interferences multiples et parfois anormales". Evidence was also discovered that certain Chambers had in fact made clandestine payments and had given an abnormal amount of assistance to FNSEA publications.(58) Significantly, the report was not denied, though Chamber officials argue that the situation has changed since then. A further Cour des Comptes report in 1981 suggested that this confidence was misplaced. In any case, MODEF persisted with its accusations.(59)

MODEF also had two other grievances against the Chambers, both connected with the electoral system. The first was the lack of proportional representation which created a wide gap between MODEF's respectable percentage of votes and its almost negligible share of seats. Proportional representation became MODEF's first victory after its official recognition in 1981. The other grievance was the nature of the electoral system. MODEF claimed that the reforms in the electoral system carried out in 1969 amounted to gerrymandering. Previously, all farmers subject to taxation by the Chambers had the right to vote in the farmers electoral college. This was changed to create a separate college for retired farmers and to disenfranchise small farmers with other jobs who were not subject to the agricultural social security system. To make matters worse from the MODEF point of view, representation of landowners and the official organizations was increased. The latter measure was widely seen as a way of permitting Michel Debatisse to overcome his electoral humiliation in Puy-de-Dôme by obtaining a seat through nomination by one of these organizations.(60) As MODEF's official cartoonist put it: "Ils ont du modifier les Chambres pour ne pas, les MODEFier".(61)

The behaviour of MODEF in those Chambers where it was represented conformed to the organization's practice of politicizing economic issues. After its first electoral victories in 1964, MODEF eventually realized the danger which such representation created. To concentrate purely on technical issues was to accept the definition of problems by the state, i.e. to accept the broad lines of agricultural policy. By 1965, MODEF leaders were warning against the threat of indirect incorporation. MODEF representatives were instructed to "éviter que les travaux des Chambres d'Agriculture soient accaparés par des enquêtes et études concourant à l'application du plan gouvernemental de liquidation des exploitations familiales..."(62)

This view has dictated MODEF policy ever since. MODEF's strategy was therefore to use the Chambers as a platform for agitation rather than attempt to use their services as a means of overcoming the difficulties of the family farm. This was the case in both the Landes where MODEF controlled the Chamber and in the Charente where it was a strong minority.

The Landes case is of particular interest. As president of the Landes Chamber, Marcel Sintas opened every meeting with a global attack on government policy since the captive audience included the Prefect. Most of the deliberations of the Chamber were conducted in a similar spirit. Contrary to the mythology which insists that a PCF activist who gains an official position sets out to increase his empire of subordinates and colonize the bureaucracy, such a policy was conspicuously absent in this case. Indeed the services provided by the Chamber were kept to the minimum and there was no evidence to suggest that staff were appointed on political criteria. Such a policy served two purposes at the same



time. On the one hand, it helped to maintain MODEF popularity by limiting the level of taxation. On the other, it prevented the growth of services which would rival those of MODEF, services which were an important part of MODEF's success in the department. As a result, when the FDSEA finally gained control in 1979, it was left with a seriously underdeveloped institution which, in the short term, presented more problems than advantages.(63)

The agitational policy was even more marked in the Charente where MODEF's minority status allowed it the luxury of a purely oppositional role. Criticism of government policy was accompanied by an extremely negative approach, reminiscent of a "rate payer" county councillor, to any initiatives undertaken by the UDSEA-led majority. One of the main themes of MODEF speakers was the alleged extravagance of the majority.(64) For instance, in 1965 MODEF denounced the proposed employment of a researcher.(65) In 1969, Mineau denounced the rise in the cost of subscriptions to the Regional Chamber and the cost of work carried out on the Chamber's premises. "3,000 par çì, 3,000 par là. Les petits ruisseaux font les grands rivières".(66) Throughout the 1970s MODEF kept up a constant barrage of criticism over the alleged dishonesty of the accounts presented to the Chamber by its Executive. By the end of the decade, MODEF had found itself a cause celebre to keep itself occupied, obstructing the projected plan to move the Chamber headquarters to more conveniently located and more suitable offices in the centre of Angouleme by persistent demands for further information on costs and specifications.(67)

A policy based on all-out opposition to the majority, a majority considered to be in the service of the state, led MODEF into positions which were not always accepted without question in its own ranks. The most extreme case occurred in February 1980. The majority of MODEF representatives, led by Mineau, condemned the compulsory slaughter of animals suffering from brucellosis on the grounds that it was unnecessary, ineffective in stopping the spread of the disease and that compensation was insufficient. Mineau claimed that: "Si on avait mis tous les tuberculeux en sanatorium autrefois sous prétexte qu'ils pouvaient devenir contagieux, il aurait fallu en couvrir des villes entières."(68) Instead, MODEF called for more research to be conducted on vaccines which would remove the need for such drastic solutions as slaughter. Given the dangers which the disease presents to animals and farmers, this was too much for one of MODEF's MRG representatives who therefore abstained in the vote.

MODEF's increasingly negative stance resulted from its pessimistic appraisal of the possibilities open to it in the Chamber. Its representatives became more and more convinced that it had no hope of persuading the majority to adopt even the most innocuous of its proposals. Just as MODEF opposed the majority, the majority systematically opposed MODEF. This was particularly clear after 1970 when the UDSEA took over the presidency of the Chamber. As relations between the majority and the minority deteriorated, MODEF was increasingly excluded from the less public work of the Chamber. Since the Chamber normally met only twice a year, the bulk of its business was conducted by the Executive Committee and by its delegates to the various institutions, government advisory committees, and local voluntary associations. MODEF was always excluded from the Executive, prompting

complaints from MODEF that the official accounts were meaningless in the absence of MODEF scrutiny. But it had been given a limited but significant share of the delegate posts. These responsibilities were gradually eroded until MODEF was excluded from all its remaining posts of any significance such as the Regional Chamber, the SUAD and the Etablissement Départementale de l'Elévage (EDE) in 1979. After the first meeting following the 1979 elections, MODEF was left with representation on only six of the forty-two bodies on which the Chamber was represented. Removed from the important bodies such as the SUAD and the EDE (important because of the funds at their disposal), MODEF had to content itself with such interesting bodies as the departmental advisory committee on student grants.(69)

Inevitably, demoralization set in. Though Mineau, seconded by the dumb insolence of Jacques Dournois, had always made the bulk of MODEF's interventions, this became even more marked as the decade wore on. But even these interventions became less and less frequent as Mineau found it more and more difficult to summon up enthusiasm for the conflict with the omnipotent majority. MODEF's other representatives came to regard their position as more of a burden than an honour and there was little competition for nomination as a candidate by the early 1980s.(70)

By the end of Giscard's reign, it was patently clear that MODEF had only two motives in continuing to pay any attention to the Chamber. Firstly, and less importantly, it provided a limited platform and attracted a certain amount of publicity from the local press. More importantly, MODEF was obliged to devote a large proportion of its limited resources to the Chamber since the elections were a vital test of its representative status. In this light, electoral victory was an end in

itself rather than as a means to an end. Victory did not allow MODEF to implement its proposals but it did serve warning on the state that MODEF was a force with which it had to reckon.

MODEF's pessimism and the FNSEA's belief in MODEF's inability to be constructive were both self-fulfilling predictions. By limiting MODEF participation in the Chambers, the FNSEA prevented the kind of indirect incorporation which MODEF feared. At the same time, MODEF's agitational strategy confirmed the FNSEA in its view that MODEF should be kept out of Chamber policy-making and administration as far as possible. MODEF's strategy in the Chambers leaves a question mark hanging over its head; is MODEF really the kind of demagogic group it was alleged to be by its detractors? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to examine MODEF's role in the economic side of the agri-complex.

#### 6. THE CREDIT AGRICOLE

Apart from the FNSEA and the APPCA, the only other body officially recognized as representative before June 1981 was the Federation Nationale de la Co-operation, du Credit et de la Mutualité Agricole (FNCCMA). This organization links the three main areas of the economic agri-complex, marketing, finance and social security. Rather than deal with these organizations in order of precedence, it will prove more useful to analyse them in order of the degree of hostility which MODEF manifested towards them. In such a competition, the Credit Agricole had no rival for first place.

The Credit Agricole is not only the major financier of French agriculture but also one of the world's largest banks.(71) By 1975, it had 3 million shareholders drawn from the agricultural community, 40,000 of whom served as local elected officers. Its 55,000 full-time staff handled the affairs of some 12 million clients.(72) The structure of the Credit Agricole distinguishes it from its rivals in the banking world. Legally, it is a co-operative with its shareholders organized in 91 "Caisses Regionales", most of which are constituted on a departmental basis. These are co-ordinated by the Caisse Nationale du Credit Agricole (CNCA).

Obviously, given its financial importance the Credit Agricole is not just another co-operative. In order to ensure the effectiveness of financial and monetary policy, successive governments had to exercise supervision over it. In practice, the co-ordinating role of the CNCA was used to limit the autonomy of the CRCAs. Apart from laying down the framework in which the Credit Agricole was permitted to operate, the government also nominated the managing director of the CNCA; an office held between 1963 and 1975 by a Gaullist Inspecteur des Finances, Jacques Mayeux.

As the agricultural bank and as a major financial institution, the Credit Agricole has been an instrument of financial and agricultural policy. Its shareholders, i.e., the farmers, were caught between the periodic credit squeezes inspired by the Ministry of Finance and credit regulations designed to further the development of "viable farms" imposed by the Ministry of Agriculture. To a large extent, this resulted in a policy of robbing the poor to feed the rich. The savings of the smaller farmers were lent to the richer modernizing elements.

From MODEF's point of view, the purpose of the Credit Agricole was being betrayed by its role in furthering capitalist agriculture at the expense (literally) of the family farm.(73)

MODEF's sense of grievance was aggravated by the influence of the FNSEA within the CRCAs and the presence of its activists as elected local officers. One writer claims that the Credit Agricole "has responsibility for deciding which farms survive and which founder, bringing a degree more rationality into the sifting process than the operation of entirely free market conditions would have done."(74) MODEF took a less sanguine view, believing that the logic of the market was being replaced by the even harsher logic of the FNSEA. According to MODEF, constant vigilance was necessary to prevent the Credit Agricole from being used as a weapon in its battle to incorporate the entire profession into the FNSEA. MODEF repeatedly claimed that certain CRCAs had a policy of refusing to grant loan applications unless they were countersigned by the local FNSEA chieftain. It was also alleged that MODEF activists and candidates were warned that their union activities would threaten their relations with the Credit Agricole.

At the same time, MODEF claimed a certain degree of success in preventing such occurrences. Where MODEF was relatively well organized, the publicity given to such practices succeeded in more or less eliminating them. But MODEF failed to launch a systematic campaign about these alleged abuses, nor did it make a co-ordinated effort to get its activists elected as local officials. This was left to individual initiative. Rather than seek such limited but possible victories, MODEF preferred to pursue wider and more optimistic goals.

During the 1970s, MODEF mis-directed its efforts to the question of Credit Agricole surpluses. (Being a co-operative, it does not make profits). Like many other banks, the Credit Agricole made a great deal of money out of the economic crisis. MODEF seized upon this opportunity to demand that the money be used to halt the decline of the family farm.

Pourquoi cet argent n'est-il pas remplacé dans l'agriculture? Parce que le gouvernement, avec l'encadrement du credit, empêche le réinvestissement de ses sommes dans l'agriculture. Maintenant il va prélever sur ses bénéfices qui appartiennent aux agriculteurs. Le Credit Agricole est une co-operative et il faut distribuer les bénéfices. Le gouvernement fait une ponction pour financer une partie du budget de l'agriculture... C'est de l'argent qui est détourné de son objectif. Avec ça on pouvait à la fois remettre un peu d'argent aux agriculteurs, leur prolonger leur credit, baisser leur taux d'intérêt, etc.(75)

The problem with such an argument was that it ignored the changes in the Credit Agricole which permitted the generation of such surpluses. If the Credit Agricole remains the farmers bank, it is no longer an agricultural bank. At the crudest level, this is visible in the ever-growing number of Credit Agricole branches in the farmer-free zone of Paris. Gaudibert points to the wide range of activities in which the Credit Agricole has invested, ranging from travel firms to computers. One famous example was its role in financing the acquisition of L'Express by James Goldsmith.(76) Even in its role as a clearing bank, the major growth area has been in the mortgage market with its saving plan for urban house purchases.(77) If the MODEF solution was adopted, one would be transferring money from the urban to the agricultural

economy, not restoring it to its rightful owners. In this respect. MODEF violated its stated desire to analyse the problems of agriculture in the context of the economy as a whole.

But why should MODEF violate its own principles in such a way, abandoning the possibility of limited reform in favour of what would amount to an economic counter-revolution? In this case, at least, the dangers of close involvement within the CRCAs appeared to outweigh the potential benefits. If MODEF had succeeded in winning a strong position, it would only have been a negative victory, permitting it only to prevent what it saw as FNSEA abuses. All it could have achieved was fairer implementation of the policies dictated by the Finance and Agriculture Ministries through the intermediary of the CNCA. It therefore risked incorporation. By concentrating on the wider policy issues, such as the disposal of the surpluses, MODEF was able to put forward a positive policy and challenge the principles rather than the details of official policy. Rather than maintain an outsider status for the sake of it, MODEF's strategy was therefore dictated by a rational cost-benefit analysis. Whether this analysis was correct is a problem which will be deferred until the concluding pages of this chapter.



## 7. CO-OPERATION AND MODEF

As far as the co-operative sector is concerned, the cost-benefit analysis resulted in a more favourable attitude to a strategy of working from the inside. Since the late 1960s, MODEF has treated co-operation as an essential element in the defence of the family farm and its activists have played a part in the affairs of the co-operatives. The idea of the co-operative as an instrument of economic defence is, of course, a theme common to all organizations in French agriculture.

The problem which MODEF faced was that the Proudhonian idyll of co-operation was undermined by the political and economic pressures unleashed by the Fifth Republic. Just as farmers divided into modernizers and traditionalists, co-operatives themselves became divided between the large bureaucratized giants and the small-scale participatory co-operatives.(78) Chapter 3 shows that MODEF found the latter more conducive than the former.

The case of the Union Laitière Pyrénées-Aquitaine-Charentes described in Chapter 3 is far from unique. The concentration of co-operatives led to the formation of other giant co-operatives such as the Union Laitière Normande. In the most detailed study of co-operatives yet carried out, Canevet points out that twelve co-operatives accounted for eighty per cent of the turnover of the co-operative sector in Brittany by 1970. Confronted with the logic of the capitalist economy, these co-operatives were obliged to be more or less capitalist themselves. Not only did such co-operatives find themselves in direct competition with private multinationals, they began to combine with private firms in order to meet such threats. In some cases, the co-operatives formed such close links with private firms that virtual mergers took place, as between the

Union Laitière Normande co-operative and the privately owned  
Negobeurouef.(79)

As several writers have pointed out, such co-operatives no longer served as agents of defence of the family farm but of the kind of modernization desired by the state.(80) Canevet has described the change in the nature of the relationship between co-operative and farmer brought about the emergence of such co-operatives:

La co-operative tend donc à devenir une véritable entreprise industrielle et commerciale, en vue de constituer un pôle de développement régional et de lutter contre les effets de domination par les secteurs secondaire ou tertiaire. Mais, ce faisant, elle a souvent tendance à adopter un comportement de firme, qui n'est pas nécessairement conforme aux intérêts des producteurs: tendance à sélectionner les adhérents en éliminant les moins efficaces; à comprimer les prix payées aux producteurs et aux salariés - pour demeurer compétitive face aux entreprises du secteur privé.(81)

This transformation of the co-operative sector was actively assisted by the state. In its hurry to create a French agro-business sector capable of competing with the US, UK and Anglo-Dutch multinationals, the state dismantled the barriers to the capitalist development of co-operation. In order to allow co-operatives to overcome the restraints imposed by the principle of one man-one vote, various legal changes were made. Different categories of membership were permitted, ranging from full membership to temporary contracts. The possibility of the establishment of Sociétés d'Intérêt Collectif Agricole (SICAs) to carry out some of the activities of the co-operatives also reduced democratic

participation since, unlike co-operatives, voting rights in SICAs are in proportion to the share of capital invested. SICAs also provided a vehicle for private investment in the co-operative sector.(82) Finally, through its control of the Credit Agricole, the government was able to decide which co-operatives should receive the necessary finance for modernization and which ones should be swallowed by their rivals.

MODEF's initial reaction to this state of affairs was to condemn the co-operatives for betraying their members interests. But unlike Paysan Travailleur, MODEF never took a position of systematic opposition to the co-operatives. By 1976, MODEF was arguing that the traditional principles of co-operation, the defence of the family farm and democratic decision-making, had to be defended. The connection between MODEF support and small-scale co-operation (as in the Vaucluse) and this stance is self-evident. Though recognizing the transformation in the nature of co-operation, MODEF re-iterated the traditional view of the purposes of co-operation.

Le MODEF accorde à la co-operation agricole une large place dans la recherche des voies et des moyens d'atténuer, de freiner et de contrecarrer les desseins d'une politique agricole dont la malfaisance à l'égard des agriculteurs laborieux n'est plus à démontrer.(83)

However, MODEF's solution to the problems created by modernization addressed itself to symptoms rather than causes, calling for the re-establishment of democracy within the co-operatives. This remained MODEF's position throughout. As far as MODEF was concerned, economic changes were the reflection of political will rather than vice versa.

In MODEF's 1978 Programme, the economic problems of co-operation are analyzed but the conclusion drawn is that such problems are due to the fact that: "Une réglementation anti-co-operative soumet des branches entières de la co-operation à la domination directe du grand capital." (84) Nevertheless, MODEF was:

hereux de constater que, malgre un système économique hostile à la co-operation, malgré les difficultés et le manque d'encouragement les agriculteurs recherchent de plus en plus des formes nouvelles d'organisation pour la production et la commercialisation. Cette recherche d'une autre voie plus sociale et plus humaine répondant aux nécessites de développement technique et économique est une des grandes richesses de notre agriculture. (85)

But MODEF's proposals for overcoming this state of affairs, apart from a vague reference to financial assistance, remained confined to demands for democratization.

The favourable attitude to the principle of co-operation meant that MODEF activists were to be found in positions of responsibility within the co-operatives. Apart from the cases already mentioned, the wine co-operative based in Montblanc in the Hérault, one of the largest of its kind in Europe, was headed by the town's mayor and MODEF vice-president, Emilien Soulié. (86) One should also remember the role of the Pernes co-operative in the establishment of the Vaucluse Federation.

The problem for MODEF is that its activists did not occupy the share of offices in co-operatives commensurate with the number of its supporters who belonged to co-operatives. This was a particularly severe limitation on MODEF influence in departments where unionism has traditionally been virtually indistinguishable from co-operation. This explains why MODEF has not had the kind of success one would expect in Midi departments such as the Hérault, and Aude and Gard.

Apart from the blocking action of the FNSEA, MODEF activists found themselves at a disadvantage in several respects. In the first place, their early hostility to the transformation of co-operation damaged their credibility as co-operative managers. Secondly, the fact that MODEF did not have the same resources to devote to the economic and managerial education of its activists as did the FNSEA meant that such activists were left to their own devices. Finally, once again, there was no systematic campaign to colonize the co-operatives with MODEF men.

Was this yet another example of the refusal to accept responsibility? From the MODEF point of view, this can only be answered by another question - responsibility for what? Prepared to accept positions of authority in the small-scale co-operatives which remained at the service of the producers, MODEF had little incentive to involve itself in the large co-operatives in which the interests of the members were subordinated to those of the co-operative. Given its analysis of agricultural policy, acceptance of the changed role of such co-operatives was tantamount to accepting responsibility for the liquidation of the family farm. In a sense, the real act of demagoguery would have been to pretend that more farmer-orientated management would have made any difference. MODEF's attitude was therefore the result of

a serious analysis of the role of co-operation rather than a symptom of congenital oppositionism.

#### 8. THE MUTUALITE SOCIALE AGRICOLE

This point becomes even clearer when one considers MODEF's role in the final part of the agri-complex, the social security system. With an ageing labour force and the increasing economic difficulties of agriculture, the Mutualité Sociale Agricole (MSA) came to the forefront of agricultural politics. By the late 1970s, the issue of social security had become one of MODEF's favourite themes. Like co-operation, the MSA presented both an opportunity and a threat. On the positive side, the MSA provided a very necessary service. But at the same time, the cost of the service provided yet another burden on farm incomes.

The structure of the MSA is very similar to that of the Credit Agricole. Each department has its own MSA Caisse. But unlike the Credit Agricole, there is a much greater democratic involvement in the MSA. The MSA is administered by an Executive Committee elected by the cantonal delegates, who are elected by the farmers. Through this, MODEF was able to secure participation in the administration of the social security system, and in one case, to obtain control of the MSA (the Landes). Neither did the degree of central direction exercised by the government-appointed director general of the Credit Agricole exist. Instead, government influence has been exercised indirectly by control of the subsidies necessary for the solvency of the local MSAs.

Much of the resentment over the cost of social security derived from the regressive nature of the contributions structure. Contributions were levied on the basis of presumed rather than real income. Furthermore, the presumption itself was founded on the land register (registre cadastral) in which each parcel of land has been classified.

Unfortunately for many small and medium-scale farmers, the register was notoriously misleading about the real income capacity of each farm. To make matters worse, the sliding scale of contributions was so constructed as to ensure that the farmer with twenty acres paid a higher level per acre than his counterpart with 200 acres.

MODEF's other major grievance against the social security system was the suspicion that it was being used by the government as a tool in its drive to reduce the number of farmers. With the government limiting its subsidies to the MSA, the departmental Caisses were obliged to raise the level of contributions. At the same time, the diminishing number of farmers had to support an ever increasing number of pensioners, and to a lesser extent, children. Some MODEF activists also came to believe that the government was also tightening the screws by transferring part of the cost of the health service from the health budget to the social security system.(87)

Since most of the problems arose from deliberate acts of policy by the government rather than direct economic pressures, MODEF made a firm distinction between the MSA as an institution and the policies imposed upon it by central government. Consistently supporting the MSA as a positive institution, MODEF activists could present themselves as cantonal delegate candidates with some success. Though in a minority in all the Caisses except the Landes, MODEF policy was not to contest the

policies adopted by the majority. Instead, such delegates concentrated on the resolution of individual problems, i.e. obtaining more time to pay, holding up the bailiffs, etc. To the extent that collective action was undertaken in the field of social security, it was directed against the government rather than at the MSA itself. For example, when MODEF, in the summer of 1981, decided to protest against the level of social security contributions, it took pains to ensure that its protests were not seen as an attack on the MSA. In a letter to the president of the Vaucluse MSA, the MODEF Federation leader, Camille Fare, stated that:

Une action va s'engager dans les jours qui viennent. Elle ne sera en aucune façon dirigée contre le Conseil d'Administration de la MSA mais aura pour but de l'aider dans ses interventions auprès de la tutelle nationale afin d'obtenir les aides nécessaires qui permettraient d'équilibrer le budget des caisses.(88)

Because of this emphasis on the positive nature of the institution, MODEF leaders went out of their way to ensure that their own most desperate supporters understood the benefits of the MSA and the responsibility of the government for the drawbacks. For instance, when one irate member of a group of MODEF demonstrators lobbying the Charente MSA in April 1981 proposed invading the building and throwing away the files, Raymond Mineau asked him who he thought would pay his mother's pension if the records were destroyed. The distinction between the MSA and its disadvantages was then made clear when the MSA president joined MODEF leaders in a delegation to the Prefecture to ask for government assistance to the MSA to permit it to postpone payment deadlines.



In the one Caisse controlled by MODEF, the Landes, the same principle was in evidence. Despite the accusations of demagoguery and irresponsibility which have been thrown at MODEF, the Landes MSA was competently administered in a way very similar to the MSA in other comparably deprived departments. The resolution of individual difficulties, however sympathetically handled, was not permitted to impinge upon the financial stability of the MSA itself. The obvious comparison is with the PCF municipal policy of constant denunciations of the limits imposed by central government coupled with competent administration within those limits.(89)

Unlike the cases which have been previously examined, the MSA met certain criteria which allowed MODEF to take such a nuanced view. The MSA provided an essential service in the maintenance of the family farm and therefore provided an antidote to the logic of the capitalist market and the consequent agricultural exodus. As such, it was a victim, rather than a beneficiary of government policy. These incentives encouraging MODEF to rally to the defence of the family farm were further reinforced by the democratic structure of the MSA which permitted MODEF to participate in such a defence.

## 9. THE SOCIETES D'AMENAGEMENT FONCIER ET D'ETABLISSEMENT RURAL (SAFERS)

The example of the SAFERs provides an illuminating case study of MODEF's attempts to resist the course of Fifth Republican agricultural policy. The Société d'Amenagement Foncier et d'Etablissement Rural (SAFER) was one of the major innovations of the reformist legislation of 1960-62. The creation of the SAFER resulted from the desire to limit speculation in land and to pursue the government's objectives on the use of land and the creation of viable farms. To this end, the SAFER was supposed to limit the maximum and minimum size of farms, preventing excessive concentration and preventing the creation of new farms which would prove unviable. In order to achieve these objectives, the SAFER was given the power to intervene in land sales and to purchase the land itself. It then had to resell the land to the farmer or farmers most likely to put it to profitable use.<sup>(90)</sup> By the end of 1977, the SAFERs, of which there were thirty-one, had acquired 986,722 hectares and resold 849,600 hectares to farmers.<sup>(91)</sup> Almost one farmer in ten had acquired land through the intermediary of the SAFERs.<sup>(92)</sup>

MODEF's hostility to the SAFERs predated their establishment in 1963. The critique of the SAFERs was based on the implications which the new institutions had for the idealized view of "traditional" agriculture. Indeed, many of MODEF's most impassioned defences of private property in the land were put forward in the arguments employed against the SAFERs (see Chapter 5). In June 1960, MODEF pointed out the dangers it believed the proposed SAFERs embodied:

Les fameuses SAFERs prévues dans la même loi, raflant toutes les terres disponibles, sans payer de droit de timbre et d'enregistrement, afin de constituer des exploitations viables, c'est-à-dire de grandes exploitations.(93)

The other dimension of the critique was therefore the issue of the development of capitalism in agriculture. The SAFER was seen as just another method of eliminating the small and medium sector. This was made more explicit in a detailed analysis of the SAFERs published in October 1961. According to MODEF, the SAFERs would permit the state to intervene in matters which should be left to farmers themselves. Since the state representatives on the SAFER boards had the power of veto, they would be the real force in decision-making. Secondly, the financial resources of the SAFERs would allow them to outbid the small farmer on the land market. If this was not possible, the SAFERs would still be able to use their legal powers to make a compulsory purchase order. This would disrupt the free market in land and the rights of farmers to acquire and dispose of property as they saw fit. Furthermore, the power delegated to the SAFERs to hold the land they acquired for up to five years seemed to be highly suspicious. In the apocalyptic climate of the early 1960s, this was taken to mean that the government was prepared to allow land to lie fallow until it had reduced the number of farmers to that compatible with the existence of an entirely capitalist agriculture.(94)

The problem with the MODEF analysis was twofold. On the one hand, its hostility to capitalist agriculture led it to try and defend the indefensible. Choosing to defend the traditional concept of private property involved not only defending an old conception of farming but

also old farmers. For those who had not yet acquired sufficient land, particularly the young, something along the lines of the SAFERs was in their interests. The only beneficiaries of the free market in land were the older farmers nearing the end of their career and wishing to dispose of their land. On the other hand, MODEF's exaggerated fears of the dangers of the SAFERs meant that it allowed the real dangers to go unchallenged.

Though MODEF appeared to have stumbled upon the truth at a very early stage, it was never reconciled to it. Whilst MODEF was preoccupied with defending the gains of 1789, the FNSEA was happily engaged in colonizing the SAFERs and their all-important technical committees. (The technical committees make recommendations about the disposal of land which were usually rubber-stamped by the SAFER boards.) MODEF was effectively excluded from the SAFER decision-making process.

Nevertheless, when the SAFERs carried out their first operations in 1963, MODEF were quick to realize that FNSEA officials had benefitted from these operations. For instance, the Société d'Amenagement Foncier de l'Aveyron, Lot at Tarn (SAFALT) allocated land to the president and the general secretary of the Aveyron FDSEA. However, MODEF insisted upon the class rather than the clientelist aspects of such decisions:

Les SAFERs sont destinés à rafler les terres qui feraient si bien l'affaire des petits et moyens exploitants, et avec les terres à constituer les exploitations destinées à devenir demain de grandes exploitations industrialisées en accaparant les dépouilles des exploitants familiaux...(95)

Since then, MODEF has constantly equated class and clientelism. For instance, ten years later, MODEF still argued that:

Les SAFERs ont été créés... afin de permettre de concentrer dans les mains de quelques privilégiés, les terres abandonnées par les exploitants familiaux sous la pression de la politique de liquidation. C'est la raison pour laquelle les mieux-nantis ont en général la préférence et que les attributions se font dans un cercle fermé de petit copains, la copinerie étant une des tares non seulement de la politique agricole de la Cinquième République, mais aussi de la Cinquième République elle-même...(96)

In fact, there is little evidence to suggest that the SAFERs have been exceptionally favourable to large-scale agriculture.(97) But there were frequent cases of favouritism where land was allocated to less qualified candidates who also happened to be FNSEA members, and even more so, activists of the official union. This became so blatant that even a government as favourable to the FNSEA as that of Giscard and Raymond Barre was obliged to take action. The 1977 reform of the SAFERs included a clause forcing the SAFERs to give full publicity to their acquisitions and allocations.(98)

Just as the government had realized that SAFER clientelism undermined the policy of rationalization which they existed to promote, MODEF was also forced to come to terms with the clientelistic nature of the SAFERs. Though the class analysis remained the basis of the MODEF critique, more emphasis was placed on the problem of clientelism. In September 1976, an article in L'Exploitant Familial describing the operations of the SAFER covering Loire-Atlantique and Maine-et-Loire, the SAFER Loire-Océan, concluded:

Son role de réstructuration des exploitations n'est pas rempli et qu'au contraire on a l'impression qu'un copinage s'est installé autour de cette société anonyme et qui favorise les agriculteurs aux aguets des bons coup à opérer.(99)

Similarly, the Poitou-Charente SAFER was criticized by the MODEF regional Federation. In an article entitled "La Copinerie primerait-t-il la loi", the Federation alleged:

En fait, cette commission cantonale, comme beaucoup de celles-ci, exclusivement composées des membres de l'UDSEA, s'est comporté comme une coterie faisant passer la copinerie au-dessus du bon sens et de la loi...(100)

Such a change of emphasis allowed MODEF to fight real battles instead of imaginary fears. One such case occurred in Beaumes-de-Venise in 1978. The SAFER's technical committee recommended that a farm should be allocated to the son of a local capitalist farmer in March 1978, against the wishes of the majority of the local farmers. The resistance built up by MODEF over the next few months obliged the SAFER board to take the unusual step of rejecting the technical committee report in favour of the solution advocated by MODEF and local farmers. The land was therefore divided between four local farmers whilst the farm buildings were allocated to the local wine co-operative.(101)

On the more general level, the switch from criticizing the existence of the SAFERs to contesting their methods also involved MODEF in making specific proposals for reform. Instead of challenging the need for a SAFER-type operation, MODEF argued for their replacement by more accountable bodies. The 1978 Programme included a proposal that the

powers of the SAFERs be handed over to Departmental Land Committees. These committees, unlike the SAFERs, would have the power to let as well as sell land if the beneficiary of an allocation so wished. But the major proposed reform was the democratization of the institution. Instead of the nominees of the official organizations, the Departmental Committees would be composed of directly-elected representatives of owner-occupiers, tenants and landlords. Agricultural workers and local government would also be represented. The central government would still have a delegate but the right of veto would be removed.(102)

In terms of winning widespread acceptance, this was a more realistic strategy. The principles of such a reform were accepted by both the PS and the PCF. Indeed, the Giscardian reform of 1977 was an indication of how much sympathy had been won for the principle of democratization. In effect, MODEF had, for once, moved from defence to attack, forcing the FNSEA into the defensive.

It is possible to draw a more general conclusion from the case of MODEF and the SAFERs. It is where MODEF has fought genuine battles over limited issues that it has achieved most in terms of protecting the interests of its supporters. When MODEF was obsessed by the threat to private property, a threat which never materialized, it had little effect on the course of agricultural policy. Only when it confronted the clientelistic practices of the FNSEA could it make a significant impact. Analysis was no substitute for action.

#### 10. DEMAGOGUES OR DEMOCRATS ?

There are two common threads running through each of the cases considered here. On the one hand, there is the issue of democracy, on the other, the future of the family farm. MODEF's attitude to each organization and institution was dictated by two considerations - the degree to which MODEF was able to participate and the consequences of the organization or institution upon the family farm. Where there was no institutional barrier to MODEF participation and where it had a favourable view of the organization, MODEF could play a very active role. Where one or the other of these factors was absent, MODEF's role was limited. For instance, there was no institutional barrier to MODEF participation within the Credit Agricole, but the status of the bank, as a tightly controlled instrument of the policy MODEF was designed to resist, made such participation unattractive.

In no sense can MODEF activists be seen as an isolated group of individuals, devoid of any positive ideas and concerned only to criticize, obstruct and oppose. It is undeniably true that MODEF made errors and marginalized itself in certain areas, notably in the field of co-operation. On the other hand, there were cases where a negative attitude on MODEF's part reflected exclusion by the FNSEA and its allies.

It would also appear that MODEF arrived at a belated and partial awareness of the fact that ideology is no substitute for a solid network of institutional positions and the clientelistic networks which they permit. Some of the factors behind MODEF's reluctance to build such networks were identified in the last chapter but there is one more which has emerged in the course of this chapter. Given MODEF's critique of



the FNSEA, it was inhibited in attempts to rival the FNSEA. Though necessity obliged MODEF to come to terms with this consideration in the 1970s its reluctance to become a mirror image of the FNSEA remained apparent in the 1980s.

Finally, there is the question of the role of MODEF as managers. To the FNSEA, MODEF may have appeared irresponsible and unfit to hold positions of authority in the agri-complex. This was, of course, a self-fulfilling prediction. By systematically excluding MODEF from such positions, there was no incentive for MODEF to operate in ways which would endear it to the FNSEA. At the same time, where MODEF has been strong enough to impose itself in such positions, there is no evidence to show that they were any less competent than the FNSEA. It would therefore appear to be the case that the view in which MODEF is seen as a kind of Poujadist revival is incorrect.

## CHAPTER 7    PARTY POLITICS AND PRESSURE GROUPS: MODEF AND THE LEFT

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The relationship between MODEF and the parties of the Left has been characterized in two equally extreme ways. On the one hand, for the opponents of MODEF the organization is merely a PCF front.(1) On the other, MODEF and its defenders claim that it has nothing to do with any political party whatsoever. According to MODEF, its existence and its programme are merely "l'extension de la volonté commune des exploitants familiaux de toutes conceptions politiques, philosophiques et religieuses qui composent le MODEF".(2)

Both these conceptions are polemical rather than based on serious analysis. The first sees politics and professional organization in terms of a conspiracy theory, the latter denies any importance to political parties as creative influences. This chapter deals with the reality behind the slogans.

Four interrelated areas have to be covered:

- i) The political affiliations of MODEF supporters, activists and leaders;
- ii) The nature of the connections between MODEF and the parties of the Left to which these political affiliations give rise;
- iii) The effects of these connections upon MODEF's internal organization;

- iv) The way in which the policies of the parties in relation to MODEF have shaped the connections.

It will be shown that MODEF is, in fact, a highly politicized organization but one which cannot be reduced to the agricultural supporters of the PCF. To demonstrate this point, the contrast between professional and political behaviour is discussed in detail. Once this distinction has been established it becomes possible to understand internal political conflict within the organization.

The final part of the chapter deals with the role of political parties in determining MODEF's political practices. It will be argued that the parties have seen MODEF's potential electoral value as secondary to its cadre-forming role. The PCF, the PS and the MRG have all benefited from MODEF's role in recruiting and training competent rural leaders and potential candidates for public office.

## 2. THE POLITICAL COMPOSITION OF MODEF

A distinction must be made between the leaders, activists, members and the electorate of MODEF. The closer one approaches the top level of the organization the more accurate the jibe about PCF domination of MODEF becomes. Yet even at the level of the Executive Committee this accusation is not entirely accurate.

Taking the electorate of MODEF first, the detailed analysis of the professional election results for the departments of the Charente and Vaucluse in Chapter 3 demonstrated that there is no doubt that MODEF has attracted more votes than those of the PCF. Furthermore the failure of MODEF when confronted with the FFA suggest that its electorate in departments where the FFA is absent contains a sizeable number of right-wing farmers. On the other hand there are a significant number of left-wing farmers, including members and sympathizers of the PCF, who are active in and vote for the FNSEA despite party and MODEF appeals to them to recognize that their real interests lie with MODEF. For example, many PCF members are active in the FDSEA of the Bouches-du-Rhône for material or political reasons, such as a belief in unitary organization.

This should not come as any surprise. Many writers have pointed out that there is no necessary connection between a farmer's professional choices and his political affiliations. Tavernier has described a classic case in the 1960s. "Les paysans de l'Ouest manifestent sur le plan syndical une hostilité d'une rare violence aux dirigeants de la Ve République et votent massivement pour leurs candidats à chaque consultation." (3) More specifically Tavernier has argued that many

MODEF supporters are totally unconcerned by the number of PCF members in the leadership provided they attack agricultural policy in general and the EEC in particular.(4) Similarly Bastardie has found that the success of MODEF in the Corrèze had next to no influence on the electoral prospects of the PCF in the department.(5)

Two types of explanation of this dichotomy between political and professional behaviour can be isolated. On the one hand there is the ignorance thesis, on the other the distrust thesis. Bodiguel argues that farmers are politically ignorant, avoid making unpleasant choices and therefore "se réfugient dans le vote traditionnel".(6) This argument is supported by Tarrow's evidence showing that farmers have very high levels of participation in elections and very low levels of continuous involvement in politics.(7) This can be interpreted to mean that farmers are more involved in elections but are also more ignorant of politics than are other sections of the electorate. There are several weaknesses in this line of reasoning. Firstly, there is the dubious assumption of ignorance on the part of farmers. As farm prices and incomes are determined by the state, they are more likely to be aware of government policy than other classes. Secondly, there is the even more dubious assumption that because one is a member of a political party, one is necessarily better informed than non-members. Even in the party which places most emphasis on political education, the PCF, a casual conversation reveals that the party activist often spends too much time being active to have time to inform himself.(8) Finally, the fact that rural politics are conducted on a small-scale basis - the commune or the canton - means that informal participation in politics may be much more important than participation in organizations.

The distrust thesis is even weaker. It depends on the notion that farmers are prepared to entrust the defence of their professional interests to people whom they would never trust with political power. This involves an incredibly dubious assumption that farmers are more concerned about the abstract concerns of national politics than with the franc in their pocket. Alternatively, one is asked to believe that farmers have doubts about the people whom they depend on for the defence of material interests. Perhaps the weakest link in this argument is that the PCF has often done better in national rather than local elections.(9) This argument is apparently contradicted by the presence of left-wing activists in the FNSEA. This would suggest that some farmers are willing to trust the defence of their economic interests to people whom they would not touch politically with a barge pole. This argument has several flaws. In the first place, there is the problem of the nature of FNSEA membership. As has been seen in previous chapters, belonging to the FNSEA is often more or less compulsory. Even without the element of compulsion, the majority position of the FNSEA may lead activists to prefer to agitate amongst the FNSEA majority rather than with the MODEF minority. Secondly, the separation of the leadership and service roles means that a farmer may join the FNSEA for purely material benefits without having any feeling of political loyalty towards the leadership. Finally, the less partisan image of the FNSEA permits a greater gap between politics and professional organization. The existence of a large minority opposition in the FNSEA shows that these left-wing activists do not even trust the leadership to defend their economic interests.

In this case it seems that the simplest explanation for this dichotomy has been overlooked, probably as a result of academic arrogance towards simple explanations. Not only is professional organization and party politics conceptually distinct but there is also a practical distinction made by farmers themselves. These are two different modes of activity with different objects. A Polish rural sociologist has remarked that peasant agricultural economy is marked by "la double empreinte qu'elle porte d'un fort individualisme à l'égard de l'extérieur et d'un collectivisme interne rigoureux".(10) This can be extended to the politics of the more modernized agriculture of France.

Professional organization is concerned with the defence of short-term material interests and with maximizing the income and wealth of farmers. Therefore there is a premium on unity of farmers as a whole against everyone else. In MODEF's case, there is a difference in that they argue that the real division is within agriculture, between the small and medium-scale sector and the larger enterprises. But since these small and medium-scale farmers are divided politically, there is a premium placed on professional unity amongst these farmers against the large-scale farmers. An "internal collectivism" is imposed in the face of the enemy.

Party politics, whether local or national, is concerned with long-term interest articulation. Rather than concentrating on short-term gains, party politics is interested in the continuation or transformation of the existing conditions of reproduction of the economy. Though farmers have an interest in such affairs, they are usually less pressing, so the necessity of collective action gives way to more individual appreciations.

This perspective allows us to see that the contradiction between professional and political behaviour is a false one. In concrete terms, a farmer may vote for MODEF in the hope of forcing the government and its supporting classes to make short-term concessions. In political elections he can continue to support the Right since he believes that the existence of his type of agriculture depends on the presence of the Right in power. Very crudely, in professional terms he may be concerned with the encroachments of capitalism in agriculture, in political terms with the encroachments of the USSR. As MODEF itself has pointed out several times, the issues at stake in political elections are much wider and can therefore legitimately give rise to a wider range of responses than professional elections.

Finally, there is widespread historical evidence available to show that those who wish to gain limited reforms find a useful ally in revolutionaries. The revolutionary serves as a truncheon in the hands of the reformist against his conservative opponents. As Sean O'Faolain has described politics in a predominantly agricultural country - Ireland: "never once did any constitutionalist win one of those gradual reforms without the Rebel as the real force behind him".(11) This dualism has reached its most sophisticated and self-conscious manifestation in Brittany where the biographers of Alexis Gourvennec have described the activities of his troops in the following terms: "même au plus fort des bagarres,...ils ne seront jamais des révolutionnaires. Tout au plus des réformistes qui ne négligent pas l'arme du baton et du pavé...".(12) In this respect MODEF's membership is a fairly accurate reflection of the electorate so this analysis also applies to them. This is particularly so when one remembers that membership of MODEF may entail little more than attendance at an annual meeting and the payment of a small subscription.(13)



However, when one looks at MODEF activists the story is very different. Despite the official view that MODEF contains farmers of all political persuasions, most departmental leaders admit that only the Left are actively involved in MODEF. Those who deny this base their argument on the presence of Catholics in MODEF. The changing nature of French Catholicism seems to have passed them by. Indeed, in one case given as an example the Catholic in question turned out to be a member of the PCF as well.

Tavernier also noted that the gap between the professional and political behaviour of farmers as a whole disappears in the case of the activists.<sup>(14)</sup> As well as the obvious point that political activists are more likely to make apparently more coherent decisions, there are two more important points. Firstly, an individual who devotes a great deal of his time to MODEF is more likely to attribute greater importance to professional considerations when making political decisions such as voting for Presidents and deputies. Secondly, since MODEF was set up in its early days by members of left-wing parties, there is an informal self-perpetuating process of socialization at work.

Departmental leaderships give a distorted view of the activists. Members of the PCF hold more positions of responsibility than their presence in the organization as a whole suggests. Some qualifications must be made. Firstly, this is as much a result of necessity as design since PCF members are disproportionately willing to accept such positions. Secondly, the situation varies from department to department. In the Charente where the MODEF Federation is a tripartite alliance of MRG, PS and PCF, positions have been more widely distributed than in a department such as the Vaucluse. In the latter department the major political dividing line in farming politics is through the PS

rather than through the centre. Since MODEF is an alliance between the PCF and the anti-Defferre-Duffaud socialists, the PCF has been in a stronger position. Finally, the situation began to change after 1978 and the attempts of certain MODEF leaders to align MODEF with the PCF against the PS. PS leaders and activists of MODEF began to organize themselves more effectively and to demand their fair share of responsibilities.

The PCF presence is most apparent at the national level. In the National Council elected in February 1982, independents held twenty per cent of the seats, the PS twenty-five per cent, the MRG ten percent and the PCF forty-five per cent. This allows MODEF to claim that members of the PCF are in a minority in the leadership. However, this is illusory since the independents are almost all sympathizers of one party or another and would therefore provide the extra votes needed for a majority. On the other hand, the possibility of an arithmetical majority is not particularly important because of the requirement discussed in Chapter 4 to search for a unanimous decision.

Similarly an equilibrium is maintained in the Executive Committee with a sufficient number of PCF sympathizers to guarantee a majority, if one were ever needed. More importantly, the PCF is over-represented in the higher positions in the Executive. For example, in 1982 PCF members held the only full-time president post, the general secretary's position as well as those of treasurer and assistant general secretary. Furthermore, all the full-time elected officials of the organization were members of the PCF. Of most significance, however, is the fact that the two men who held the key organizational post of general secretary since the foundation of MODEF have been members of the PCF.

Nevertheless, the significance of these facts should not be over-estimated. As has been seen already, the apparatus is very weak. In 1982, the full-time elected officials of the organization totalled four and a half. Secondly, the search for unanimity precludes the PCF from extracting the maximum benefit from its numerical force. PCF members of the leadership are very sensitive to the charges of party domination. They have an ideological commitment to unity and a material interest in carrying their supporters with them which inhibits the use of their strength. Finally, the political tendencies present within the leadership do not act as a block. This conclusion is drawn from interviews with members of the leadership from all political parties - none of whom believe or act as if the others act as one unit. Neither do they prepare their positions before official meetings.

If the equation between MODEF and the PCF were as valid as critics of MODEF would have us believe, and if the evidence above has more significance than has been argued, one would expect MODEF to be saying more or less the same things as the PCF. It is to this comparison between the ideology of MODEF and the parties of the Left that we now turn our attention.

### 3. THE IDEOLOGICAL LINKS OF MODEF, THE PCF AND THE PS

"Le MODEF présente un programme identique, pour l'essentiel, à celui du parti communiste".(15) Is this judgement accurate? To decide it is first necessary to examine PCF ideology and programmes and to analyze PS attitudes in this matter. It is possible that much of MODEF's programme is not a result of its links with the PCF but is part of a heritage shared by the entire Left. This analysis is based on a comparison of MODEF's position as described in Chapter Five with the PCF position as expounded in Les Communistes et les Paysans and Quelle Agriculture pour la France, and the PS position expressed in the document L'Agriculture et ses Travailleurs.(16)

In fact MODEF and PCF ideologies differ considerably more than their programmes, though not as much as they differ from the PS position. In Chapter 5 the main characteristics of MODEF ideology were isolated: idealization of the past, the respect for property, its attitude towards progress and its nationalism. The PCF shares MODEF's idyllic conception of the past before capitalism developed in agriculture. "Autrefois la famille paysanne, malgré ses nombreux enfants, pouvait tant bien que mal, vivre sur elle-même".(17) The egalitarian village community has been killed off by the development of capitalism in the countryside. Rather than being pleased with the "rescue from the idiocy of rural life", the PCF laments the fact that the sons and daughters of farmers are forced into the factories and towns. Though Francois Mitterrand has idealized his rural childhood, his party agricultural specialists do not share his views.(18) But rather than engage in the task of de-mystification the PS agricultural experts prefer to ignore the past - envelopping it in a silence which implies disapproval.

As one interested party has argued, the French Left has a curious blindness in relation to the past:

Si la conscience du conservateur arrete le passé et la conscience de l'utopiste réifie l'avenir, la conscience de gauche peut saisir le présent dans sa dimension dynamique, totalisante dès lors qu'elle fonctionne dialectiquement. Mais la fonction dialectique se fige: la fausse conscience surgit, et avec elle, la regression dans un passé mythifié ou le saut dans un avenir idéalisé.(19)

In this context, MODEF and the PCF are the conservatives, happy in the "celebration du bon vieux temps... L'âge d'or est derrière nous".(20) The PS can be seen as utopian for its failure to take account of the past and its influence on the present.

In the case of the defence of property all three organizations have different views. For MODEF private property is an essential element in their conception of agriculture. "L'agriculture doit se développer sur la base de l'exploitation familiale, dans le respect de la propriété paysanne".(21) Private property is a positive value. For the PCF, if private property is not regarded as a positive value, it is considered a fundamental political reality which cannot be altered. Its motives in supporting private property are not the same as those of MODEF. They are more a reflection of the political need to pre-empt right-wing accusations about Communist designs on private property than based on immediate economic interests. For this reason, it is an even more vigorous defender of private property than MODEF. Pointing out quite rightly that the economic cost of farmer ownership of the land is

enormous, the PCF insists that, nevertheless, this attachment must be accepted:

L'histoire lègue ainsi un lourd fardeau à la France de demain. Aucun raisonnement économique ne pourra prévenir, en effet, contre l'attachement des Français et des paysans à la propriété privée de la terre. Ils y associent la notion d'indépendance et de liberté, d'autant plus qu'il s'agit presque toujours d'un bien acquis bout par bout, à force de travail et de sacrifice.

L'avenir doit être pensé à partir de ces réalités françaises dont il faut accepter la rançon tout en cherchant les voies permettant d'en réduire le coût pour les paysans comme pour l'économie de la nation.(22)

It is interesting to note that this argument contradicts MODEF's idea that private property could be the most efficient way to organize agriculture. The PCF at least has the virtue of honesty. The PS view is very different. The PS document opens with the proposal to "remettre en cause la notion de chef d'entreprise".(23) Basically the PS believes that the only way to remove the financial burden of land ownership from the farmer's back is to separate the right to farm the land from the right to own it. The fact that MODEF's polemic with the PS in the pre-Presidential election period in 1981 concentrated on this question demonstrates most clearly the gap between the "modernist" ideology of the PS and the more traditional conceptions of MODEF.

As far as nationalism is concerned, it has already been shown (in Chapter 5) that MODEF's nationalism is not an aggressive one. The

nationalism of the PCF is much more virulent. One minor example can be seen in Les Communistes et les Paysans where Marchais and Clavaud talk of the presence of immigrants in the agricultural labour force in terms which imply that they regard this as a problem.(24) MODEF, on the other hand, does not find this an issue on which it is necessary to take sides. Whatever the personal views of MODEF members and officials about immigrant workers (and in this respect MODEF members are a fairly good cross-section of French society), these workers present an advantage in that they are prepared to work harder for lower wages than Frenchmen would accept. They are also less likely to be unionized and able to challenge their employers. This is not to argue that MODEF farmers are racist, it is simply to recognize that they have an objective interest in a hard-working compliant labour force. In other words, "l'argent n'a pas de couleur". More importantly, MODEF is less interested in conquering new markets than the PCF, preferring to concentrate on the protection of domestic markets. Whereas MODEF usually emphasizes the deleterious effects of agro-business activities on agriculture, the PCF emphasizes the consequences to the nation as a whole in nationalist terms:

Dans la mesure même où l'interdépendance s'accroît entre l'agriculture et les autres branches de la production alimentaire, une semblable évolution revient à placer peu à peu notre agriculture sous la coupe du capital cosmopolite et à faire dépendre l'approvisionnement du pays du bon vouloir et des intérêts des monopoles et des pays étrangers.(25)

We have the curious paradox of a farming organization talking in terms of class whilst the self-proclaimed party of the working class obscures

the class divisions within French society. In the pursuit of interest aggregation, the PCF neglects to mention that these monopolies are sometimes French, e.g. BSN, or that the largest supplier of agricultural machinery in France is the party's favourite firm, the nationalized Régie Renault.

In some respects the PS position is closer to the MODEF one than is the PCF. The PS points out the fallacy in the Giscardian idea of agriculture as "le pétrole vert".(26) On the one hand, currency fluctuations and the monetary compensation amounts of the 1970s have led to unfair competition, on the other the expansion of world markets has been limited. The PS and MODEF view of foreign trade is very similar. Whilst MODEF demands the "développement des échanges économiques avec tous les pays (a euphemism for the Soviet Union in particular) sur la base des avantages reciproques", the PS argues that reforms must be made to ensure that "le commerce internationale ne se fasse de manière anarchique et sous le contrôle des multi-nationales".(27)

Michael Charzat has made an interesting distinction between two types of nationalism:

Toute représentation qui ignore ou brouille la structure de classe de la société en affaiblissant la conscience de classe relève du nationalisme; toute représentation qui ne dissimule pas le caractère antagonique des rapports de production est nationale.(28)

On the one hand, there is a nationalist PCF, on the other a national PS and MODEF. However, the EEC is the great bone of contention between MODEF and the PS. If MODEF's absolute "No" to the extension of the EEC



could be considered to be compatible with the PS "Oui mais" as long as both remained part of the opposition, their attitude to the EEC is very different. For the socialists, the EEC is a step forward. Its problems must be overcome in a way conducive to further European unity. For example, the PS sees no solution to problems of agricultural marketing except in a European context. MODEF, on the other hand, sees the EEC as a necessary evil. The interests of French farmers must be placed before any abstract political idea such as European unity.

Finally, on the question of agricultural modernization and the relations between agriculture and the rest of the national and international economy, there are substantial differences of opinion. Whilst MODEF argues that "la recherche par les exploitants d'un revenu et d'avantages sociaux identiques à ceux des autres travailleurs... ne doit pas faire sous-estimer la spécificité de l'agriculture" and defends the traditional values of personal responsibility and private property, the PCF is more concerned with the analysis of the place of agriculture in the economy.(29) It stresses the fact that: "La crise agraire s'aggrave et elle ne peut recevoir de solutions détachées de celles commandées par la crise générale de la société".(30) The PS goes further. One of its major aims is to "casser l'individualisme et le corporatisme" with the intention "de redonner à l'agriculteur sa place de travailleur avec les mêmes droits, les mêmes devoirs, les mêmes garanties".(31)

The PCF has a less ambiguous attitude to modernization and progress. Instead of the MODEF argument that technical innovation may have undesirable social effects and is therefore not an end in itself, the party looks at the problem from a different angle. Modernization is a desirable end in itself, but it is frustrated by the present economic

order. The forces of production have come into conflict with the relations of production:

L'élimination des paysans aboutit à une substitution de travail industriel au travail paysan, ce qui signifie que nous arrivons à l'épuisement des possibilités de la modernisation au sein des structures actuelles et à un blocage structurel des conditions de production.(32)

In fact the PCF is as often criticized on the Left for its "confiance sans réserve dans le Progrès avec un P majuscule..." as it is by the Right for its defence of outmoded sectors of the economy.(33)

Though MODEF and the PS are in agreement in denouncing "l'industrialisation anarchique" or "l'industrialisation à l'outrance", their paths soon diverge.(34) The PS has a much more Malthusian position on the possibilities of technical progress, market growth and the productivist conceptions which have governed agricultural policy under the Fifth Republic, such as the excessive use of machinery, fertilizers, animal feedstuffs, pesticides, etc. It also emphasizes the dubious possibilities of growth in export markets.(35) MODEF, on the other hand, thinks that it is in the national interest that farmers are "de gros consommateurs de carburants, d'aciers et fontes, de tracteurs, de machines, de véhicules utilitaires, de produits chimiques, engrais..." etc.(38) and emphasizes the potential contribution agriculture could make to the balance of payments.

Turning our attention towards the specific demands and proposals of the three organizations, there is a wide range of agreement between the PCF

and MODEF. If one compares PCF policy on such matters as the SAFERS, selective state aid, the inadequacy of the retirement scheme and the dangers of producer groups with MODEF's programme, they are virtually identical.(37) The only real difference that one can find between the PCF and MODEF is one of emphasis. Whilst MODEF attaches primary importance to prices, the PCF sees price policy as only one issue amongst others. It concentrates on the structure of the farm, the development of co-operation and social policy.(38)

There is also a substantial range of agreement between MODEF and the PS. On issues such as the development of co-operation, rural development, the installation of young farmers, state aid for investment, etc., there is little difference. But there are four major areas of controversy. The first is perhaps the most important in the long run. Whilst both PS and MODEF recognize the need to organize agricultural markets, there is a conflict over how this is to be done. Both agree that product boards should be set up to regulate markets, but whilst the PS wishes to organize these on a European level, MODEF feels that they should be national bodies, particularly since MODEF see other European farmers as the main problem. However, since other European countries have failed to display any interest for this proposal, the PS government has been forced to implement it within national boundaries, thus postponing a showdown with MODEF. Another problem remains, the limits of the powers given to the product boards. The PS intends them to intervene in the regulation of production as well as markets, an issue on which MODEF is itself divided.(39)

Secondly, there is the matter of pricing policy. Since the PS recognizes the existence of surpluses, it proposes price guarantees for

limited quantities - quotas set at a level sufficiently high to guarantee the income of the small and medium-scale sector. But as MODEF rejects the idea that surpluses exist, all production must be guaranteed a minimum price. For this reason it is also opposed to the PS idea of a new price structure reducing subsidies on the most and protected products and using the money made to subsidize the underprivileged products. Finally the major difference between the two organizations the fact that the PS does not see pricing policy as an important way of raising the standards of living of the majority of farmers. According to the PS, price increases without reforms in production, farm structure and marketing are self-defeating - merely increasing class differentiation and inequality within agriculture.(40)

Thirdly, social security is a source of controversy. Both PS and MODEF are agreed on the need to reform the absurdly inegalitarian system of contributions, and to eventually merge the MSA with the standard system. But they differ on the basis on which to fix contributions in the reformed system. MODEF wishes to retain the present method based on the "revenu cadastral" but calls for the revision of the land register and a change in the contribution scales. The PS, however, wishes to base contributions on real income, hence its insistence on the need for the "transparency of incomes". This is the real foundation of MODEF's disagreement since it would involve compulsory accounts for all farmers. MODEF claims that its opposition to compulsory accounts is based on the cost but it is more plausible that the real concern is with the greater knowledge which officialdom would gain of the real state of the finances of agriculture in general and the individual farmer in particular.

The final source of controversy is also the least genuine. In early 1981, MODEF's general secretary launched an attack on PS proposals on property rights and the SAFERs.(41) Despite this polemic, it is clear that the proposals of MODEF and the PS are not vastly different. MODEF proposes long-term leases, the PS outbids them by proposing working lifetime leases. Both agree on the need to stop speculation in land and to exert greater control over the use to which land classified as agricultural is put. The pressures of the market must be restricted in order to allow young men to enter the profession and prevent outsiders gaining undeserved positions of power over working farmers. The tool of this policy is to be the "Offices Cantonaux" (PS) or the "Commissions Foncières" (MODEF). MODEF and PS proposals on the powers and composition of these bodies are identical. MODEF has even accepted that the new "Commissions" should, unlike the SAFERs, have the power to let as well as to sell the land they acquire. Despite this identity of views, the conflict blew up - showing that general philosophical differences can stir up as much trouble as differences over concrete proposals.(42)

Having completed this discussion of the differences and similarities between MODEF, the PCF and the PS, two questions must be asked. How do these differences arise and what significance should be attached to them? MODEF's ideological differences with the PCF are largely a matter of emphasis, arising from the fact that the organizations have different functions. The party's role as the "spokesman of the discontented" forces it to attempt to reconcile the different demands of its various clienteles.(43) Instead of reacting against the uncomfortable positions of particular categories, it attempts to explain to them why they find themselves in such a position, and that the satisfaction of their grievances depends on the satisfaction of the grievances of the other victims of capitalism. This leads the party to place much greater

emphasis on an overall economic and political analysis rather than on a catalogue of socially desirable objectives. Whereas MODEF can quite successfully put forward a list of demands without any real concern for the possibilities for, or the consequences of, their realization, the party cannot do this. Its interest articulation role means that limits are placed on its ability to be all things to all men, since such an attitude involves abandoning interest articulation in favour of random protest. The party is therefore obliged to adopt positions which may involve more than one of its clienteles whose interests may diverge - in which case the party is condemned to dissatisfy one of them. For example, the concern expressed about the presence of foreign agricultural labourers may be irrelevant or even inimical to the interests of MODEF members, but appeals nevertheless to French farm labourers who see their efforts to organize in order to profit from a situation of relative scarcity undermined by the influx of foreigners. The effect on PCF ideology produced by this constant search for a synthesis of potentially conflicting interests has been well described by Georges Lavau:

Dans une large mesure, le PCF suit les idées dominantes mais sans s'y conformer tout à fait. Il tient compte du sens commun et tente de le corriger sans s'y opposer directement, mais sans se contenter de le reproduire.(44)

MODEF does not feel such pressures from its members and potential members. If it has to make the occasional gesture towards the idea of national interest rather than the class-based arguments it habitually uses, this is imposed on MODEF by its desire to influence government and by the political education its activists receive in political parties.

In fact, MODEF explicitly rejects any attempt to weaken the class nature of the organization. MODEF is happy to put forward demands and allow parties and governments to deal with the responsibility of deciding whether or not such proposals can be accommodated. "Nous ne sommes pas un parti politique qui aspire être au gouvernement".(45)

This is only part of the story. Political parties do not want to abdicate their responsibility for interest articulation to class or sectional organizations. This is as true of the PS as it is of the PCF, as shown by Francois Mitterrand's attacks on the Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail (CFDT) leaders who "rêve de faire du parti socialiste la courroie de transmission de la CFDT".(46) The PCF has been even more systematic in limiting the pretensions of sectional organizations. Since the mid-1950s when the CGT "Programme pour une économie de paix, d'indépendance nationale et de progrès social" was sabotaged by the PCF, the party has never allowed its members in other organizations to promote such global programmes, since this type of approach undermines the necessity and the possibility of the party exercising its self-proclaimed leading role.(47)

The similarities between MODEF and PCF proposals can be interpreted as the result of the heavy PCF presence in the apparatus of the organization. If this is accepted there are still two competing explanations. Is it the case that MODEF policy is dictated by the PCF? Or is PCF agricultural policy heavily influenced by MODEF? As one MODEF leader argued about the programmatic similarities: "Autant dire que la politique du PCF c'est la politique du MODEF".(48)

The evidence suggests that the latter is the case. Firstly, the concern of MODEF to safeguard its unity precludes the PCF group from imposing its policies on the organization. Secondly, the example of the respective attitudes of MODEF and the PCF to private property in the land seems to indicate that PCF is following MODEF with a reluctant endorsement of traditional property rights. Lastly, the leadership of MODEF includes some of the PCF's most experienced and competent agricultural leaders, who participate in the work of the Central Committee's agricultural committee and therefore play an important role in PCF policy-making. Paradoxically, the party which attributes to itself the leading role as the representative of the industrial working class to some extent tails the representatives of farmers despite the fact that they are considered junior partners.

As to the importance of the differences which exist between MODEF and the PCF, they are not so acute as to provoke any open conflict between the two organizations, except in the unlikely event of the Ministry of Agriculture being placed in the hands of the PCF. If the PCF ever became responsible for the implementation of agricultural policy, the greater emphasis which the party places on the role of agriculture within the national and international economy compared to MODEF's emphasis on social demands would take on a much greater significance. This is, of course, nothing new. The strain between the PCF's sectional defence role and its role as a political party seeking political power has always presented problems for the PCF in periods of government and "responsible opposition", the Renault strike of 1947 being classic example.(49)



The PS differences with MODEF can be explained in terms of factionalism amongst the agricultural leaders of the PS. The similarities can be explained by electoral considerations. The divisions within the agricultural sections of the PS reflect the divisions within agriculture rather than the political factions within the party as a whole. Three positions can be identified - the FNSEA-SFIO tradition, the Breton FNSEA opposition and a MODEF post-Epinay PS wing. Agricultural policy-making in the PS has been dominated in recent years by the Breton wing led by Bernard Thareau. The ideology of this group bears the traces of the legacy of the PSU and Paysans-Travailleurs. Their position has been strengthened by their alliance with the socialist technocrats with professional or intellectual interests in the agricultural economy as a whole led by Pierre Joxe. MODEF leaders in the PS have had to fight a constant battle to gain legitimacy within the party, and to make the party aware that MODEF was not simply a satellite organization of the PCF. In fact, these men played a major role in overcoming the initial reluctance of the Mauroy government to recognize MODEF in June 1981.(50)

As we have seen, the practical proposals put forward by both organizations are more similar than their general perspectives. There are two aspects of this contradiction. From the PS point of view, its general analysis represents a ritual sacrifice to the unholy alliance of Breton farmers and Parisian technocrats. Its concrete proposals are dictated by the more prosaic concerns of "le socialisme viticole" and the electoral prospects of the deputies of the Ariège and the Aude. Similarly MODEF genuflects to an ideology whose emotional power increases with its growing irrelevance. In framing its concrete proposals, it has to blaspheme.

How important are these differences? There are two aspects to this question; the relations between the PS and MODEF, and the consequences of these on the internal affairs of MODEF. Until the advent of a PS government in 1981, the main problem for MODEF was that the weak connection with the PS tended to support accusations of PCF domination. The internal consequences were limited by the nature of the MODEF decision-making process and its emphasis on unity.

Given the ideological differences between MODEF and the PS, is it the case that farmers who are members of both organizations are suffering from schizophrenia? The evidence inspires a negative answer. Firstly, there is the long established tradition of unanimous decision-making within MODEF which attempts to reconcile potentially conflicting interests. Secondly, as has already been argued, there is no necessary connection between political and professional behaviour, and a farmer may be a member of the PS for reasons which have nothing to do with agriculture. More importantly, the PS is a much less politically homogeneous and disciplined party than the PCF. The official existence of factions and their ability to criticize and attempt to amend party policy means that it is impossible for a party member to internalize these policies as profoundly as a member of the PCF. In other words, PS policy is less sacred to its members. It should be noted that the MODEF presence in the PS is a political cross-section of the party. They are not necessarily those most favourable to collaboration with the PCF since they are to be found in all the factions of the PS - Mitterrand, CERES (Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Socialistes), Rocard, Mauroy.<sup>(51)</sup> The only thing that they can be said to have in common is a belief that no effective agricultural opposition to the FNSEA can be established without the co-operation of the PCF. Finally, the

experience of the majority of PS members in MODEF has led them to place loyalty to MODEF before their political loyalties. In the majority of cases, these activists were members of MODEF before joining the post-Epinay PS. They did not experience the anti-Communist obsession of the SFIO. In fact, even those who were members of the SFIO tended to associate themselves with opposition tendencies favourable to collaboration with the PCF. For example, one of the leading socialist members of MODEF was a member of the Poperen tendency in the SFIO. The geography of MODEF implantation is revealing. The two strongest Federations, the Landes and the Charente, are in departments with which Mitterrand has had a long personal connection. Indeed the Mitterrand stronghold of the Nièvre is also the home of a powerful MODEF Federation. On the other hand, in the the further one moves away from Marseille, stronger MODEF becomes. Similarly, the connection MODEF weakness and the presence of Henri Duffaud in Avignon area has already been noted.

#### 4. MODEF'S POLITICAL INTERVENTIONS

So far it has been established that MODEF is a highly politicized organization with a large proportion of its activists also involved in the political parties of the Left. Similarly, it is clear that the ideology and programme of MODEF can be placed in the context of the socialist movement in France. In Chapter 4 it has been shown how and why economic interest organizations such as MODEF have become politicized. The next part of this chapter is therefore concerned with the exact nature of the political interventions of MODEF.

Despite constant disclaimers by the leadership, it is clear that MODEF does, in fact, intervene in political questions beyond the agricultural field. If it is true that MODEF rarely takes a position on contemporary political issues, it is equally rare that it fails to intervene in an electoral period. For example, the Algerian war merits little more than a passing reference in L'Exploitant Familial of the period. The few political comments stand out by their rarity, such as the contrast made in the early 1960s between the government's willingness to spend heavily on the construction of the nuclear strike force, and its reluctance to assist farmers who were victims of natural disasters; or the article condemning the sacking of Jacques Bidalou by the Conseil Supérieur de la Magistrature in early 1981.(52)

However, this discretion is much less in evidence where elections and referenda are concerned. Though MODEF has never actively supported the PCF, in every Presidential and Parliamentary election since its foundation MODEF has adopted a line compatible with that of the PCF. The same applies to the various referenda of the Fifth Republic. On the other hand, strict silence has been maintained in cantonal and municipal elections. This is due mainly to the fact that MODEF leaders and activists will be found on opposing lists - either party lists or the "listes de racolage" so favoured in many rural communes. In order to maintain the unity of its local organizations, it must avoid taking sides. Even so, MODEF leaders admit that local elections create a great deal of tension in local branches.(53)

In its electoral interventions, MODEF has attempted to have its cake and eat it. It begins by denying any intention of calling upon its supporters to vote one way or another. It simply points out that a vote

for the Right is a vote against their own interests. This is the fundamental policy which alters only in detail according to particular situations. MODEF's first effort to exercise some influence on voting behaviour occurred early in its existence. For the referendum of January 1961, MODEF adopted a similar position to that of the PCF. For MODEF, the Algerian issue was secondary; the referendum was really about de Gaulle's need to secure a vote of confidence for his pro-monopoly policies. Quite apart from the sectarian "politique du pire", such an attitude speaks volumes on the capitulation of the French Left to imperialist ideology:

Il est de notre devoir de signaler que de toute façon le nombre de ceux qui auront fait confiance au chef de l'Etat le 8 janvier et de ceux qui s'y seront opposés entrera sérieusement en ligne de compte dans la conduite de l'ensemble de sa politique du plan de liquidation de l'exploitation familial.(54)

In October 1962 a similar analysis was made of the referendum on the election of the President by universal suffrage:

Le Mouvement estime que ce n'est pas dévier de la ligne qu'il s'est tracée qui consiste à limiter son activité aux seules questions professionnelles que d'attirer l'attention des exploitants familiaux sur l'extrême gravité de la décision qu'ils auront à prendre... Renforcer les prérogatives du chef de l'Etat revient à donner des armes nouvelles aux ennemis de l'exploitation familiale, à diminuer l'efficacité de notre lutte...(55)

In MODEF's view there is no contradiction in these two statements since there is no formal call to oppose de Gaulle, just an explanation of the consequences of supporting him - even if this explanation adds up to a not very subtle hint.

Not wishing to compromise itself further, MODEF allowed the 1962 parliamentary elections to go unmentioned. But the 1965 Presidential election confirmed that MODEF's attachment to apoliticism was not very profound. The issues of L'Exploitant Familial in the months preceding the election resounded with denunciations of the outgoing head of state at every opportunity. In October 1965, Mineau wrote:

plus nombreux seront ceux qui, le 5 decembre, rendront la monnaie de sa pièce à celui qui est le chef d'orchestre de leur liquidation, plus il y aura de chances d'échapper à cette liquidation.(56)

In November, the National Council issued the following statement:

Le MODEF estime donc rester fidèle à ses buts en appelant la paysannerie française familiale à saisir l'occasion de la prochaine election présidentielle pour exprimer son désaveu de la politique agricole poursuivie depuis 1958 sous l'inspiration et l'autorité du Chef de l'Etat - à se prononcer pour une politique économique et sociale démocratique basée sur la sauvegarde des intérêts des exploitants familiaux.(57)

The logical conclusion was the unambiguous call issued by the Executive after the first ballot to vote Mitterrand:

Les exploitants familiaux qui veulent condamner une fois de plus cette politique de destruction de l'exploitation familiale n'ont d'autre moyen que de voter pour le candidat de l'opposition - M. Mitterrand.(58)

Before jumping to the conclusion that MODEF represents "un appendice électoral du PC", one must remember that this was not only the position of the PCF but also that of the SFIO. Furthermore, hostility to de Gaulle had grown to such an extent in agricultural circles that virtually every agricultural organization - led by the FNSEA - called upon its members not to support de Gaulle.(59)

In 1967 there is a surprising gap. Nothing is said of the 1967 Parliamentary elections except for an expression of rejoicing for the relative defeat of the Right. The reasons for this abstention appear to have been primarily practical rather than ideological. February 1967 was also a period of professional elections to the Chambers of Agriculture. It was considered more important to concentrate on the professional elections and to maximize support by maintaining a non-partisan approach rather than risk falling between two stools by attempting to further the interests of the PCF and Federation de la Gauche Démocratique et Socialiste (FGDS) candidates.

The 1968 elections saw the repetition of a now familiar pattern:

Le MODEF, organisation professionnelle groupant des exploitants familiaux de toutes opinions, n'a pas à intervenir dans votre choix entre les candidats. Par contre, il est de son devoir de vous mettre en garde contre les mauvais coups qui se preparent...

Aujourd'hui dans votre intérêt, il est du devoir du MODEF de dire, dans l'immédiat, votre bulletin de vote constitue l'arme la plus efficace contre une nouvelle aggravation de vos difficultés...(60)

The logic of this statement is one of support for the candidates of the Left. 1969 saw a divided Left. MODEF's position was fairly openly aligned with that of the PCF, but with no declarations of support for the party. The referendum on the reform of the Senate was attacked ostensibly on professional and organizational grounds rather than in political terms. For MODEF, de Gaulle's proposals would remove the distinction between political and economic representation by mixing elected politicians with pressure group leaders in the same political Assembly. Agriculture in general would be under-represented (in contrast to the unreconstructed Senate) and MODEF in particular would be excluded. But in the same issue of L'Exploitant Familial, Mineau again returned to a political line of argument against the referendum:

Une majorité importante des "Ouis" constituera une approbation de l'ensemble de la politique du gouvernement, y compris de sa politique agricole. Un nombre très important de "Nons" ne peut que créer de sérieuses difficultés à la réalisation de la 2e étape du Plan Boulin, et une majorité de "Nons" signifie la mise en échec du plan et un coup très dur à toute politique de destruction des exploitants familiaux.(61)

In May 1969, MODEF once again deviated from its usual policy of only adopting a line acceptable to the Left as a whole by following the PCF "bonnet blanc, blanc bonnet" attitude to the second ballot. Refusing to distinguish between Pompidou and Poher, MODEF simply stressed the need



to continue its purely pressure group activity without reference to the election results. However, it is also necessary to point out that Duclos was not given any preferential treatment on the first ballot either - a complete contrast with the behaviour of the CGT.(62)

The 1972 referendum on British entry saw MODEF attack the government's actions once again. Despite the fact that a strong case in favour of rejection could have been made on purely agricultural grounds, MODEF criticisms again centred on the political aspects of the referendum as a vote of confidence in the government.(63) Despite the fact that the PS and the PCF were divided between abstention and rejection, this politicization of the issue by MODEF in fact helped to maintain unity within the organization. Opening up a debate on the Common Market itself could have had more profound consequences on the organization.

The 1973 Parliamentary elections saw MODEF make the same disclaimer about political involvement, and the same violation of this principle, with another contrast between Left and Right unfavourable to the latter.(64) Despite the fact that MODEF refused to approve the Programme commun, and merely confined itself to making a statement saying that the Programme commun contained many proposals which would be acceptable to MODEF, MODEF effectively supported the parties of the Left once again.

1974 saw the high point of left-wing unity, and MODEF's most direct commitment to the Left. The joint candidate of the Left was given wholehearted support:

L'élection de M. Mitterrand à la présidence de la République signifie à coup sûr et dans les délais les plus brefs des prix rémunérateurs et garantis, une aide efficace à ceux qui en ont le besoin, le développement de l'exploitation familiale par l'interdiction des cumuls et par des facilités à l'accèsion à la propriété... C'est pourquoi le MODEF appelle tous les petits et moyens exploitants sans exception, à voter et à faire voter pour M. Francois Mitterrand.(65)

For the first time, the emphasis was not on stopping the Right and the pursuit of their malevolent aims, but on the positive benefits to be expected from the hands of a PS-MRG-PCF government. This is the only case where MODEF has thrown all caution and rhetorical precautions to the wind. The only explanation lies in the wave of enthusiasm and the almost messianic expectations created by the Union of the Left and the Programme commun in the election period, and the firm conviction that Mitterrand would win. The risk involved in associating itself so clearly with the Left was outweighed by the potential advantage of recognition by the newly-elected President.

These hopes and this clarity were dashed by the break-up of the Union of the Left in September 1977. The open enthusiasm of 1974 gave way to more double talk. By 1978 MODEF had retreated. In an editorial of L'Exploitant Familial immediately preceding the 1978 Parliamentary elections, Alfred Nègre was highly critical of the Right, but ended his article in a way which underlined the internal conflicts in MODEF provoked by the end of the Union of the Left. He concluded: "Le programme national du MODEF est suffisamment explicite pour que dans la période électorale qui s'ouvre, il ne soit besoin d'autre

précision".(66) At this time, MODEF was concerned about avoiding the fall-out from the explosion of Left unity, and hence avoided taking sides for or against the competing parties of the Left. This evasive position clearly illustrated the balance of forces within MODEF - the PS and PCF groups each being too strong to allow the other to impose their line, and too weak to impose their own.

By 1981 the balance of forces had changed in favour of the PCF. The official line remained as evasive and despairing as in 1978. "Le MODEF ne prendra pas position pour un candidat ou un autre".(67) But there were two new elements. Firstly, although Frederic Lindenstaedt had begun to warn that MODEF had placed far too much emphasis on elections immediately after the break-up of the Union of the Left, this attitude had not yet won acceptance before the 1978 elections.(68) By 1981, Lindenstaedt's grim warnings had a much greater acceptance within the organization:

Nous avons trop misé sur les elections et pas assez sur la lutte revendicative qui devait les accompagner. Il faut inverser les proportions. On ne nous apportera pas l'indispensable changement de politique agricole sur un plateau d'argent.(69)

For this attitude to become dominant within MODEF, several things were necessary; another electoral defeat for the Left in general and the PCF in particular was in store, the split between the parties of the Left made activists of these parties realize that a Left government was not an overnight panacea as was felt in 1974, a belief that union activity could be conducted effectively against a right-wing government emerged, and the weight of the PCF within MODEF had increased. The second new

element demonstrates this last point conclusively. Apart from a general increase in the influence of the PCF discussed below, there was a major change at the top of the MODEF hierarchy. Raymond Mineau handed over his post of general secretary to a more openly partisan member of the PCF, Frederic Lindenstaedt. From this position, Lindenstaedt was able to push the organization more towards alignment with the PCF than the official neutral line of the organization tended to suggest. For example, he was able not only to launch a polemic against PS views of property rights, but also to attack all the major candidates and their associates, except for Georges Marchais, because of their attitude towards the EEC.(70) If in the past MODEF had previously aligned itself with the PCF, it was the first time that it had openly attacked the PS. Perhaps fortunately for MODEF, this increasing political association with the PCF was checked by the victory of Mitterrand, his insistence on a governmental alliance with the PCF, and the PCF's about turn on the class nature of Mitterrandism.

## 5. INTERNAL CONFLICT

The last few paragraphs help to explain why MODEF has limited its political concerns in the past. The overriding concern for unity up to 1977 inhibited overt politicization of the organization. It remains to analyze the extent and the causes of the conflicts created by the end of the Union of the Left.

Until 1977 the only significant split in MODEF was a breakaway led by a group of farmers in the Aube. Even this remained relatively unimportant for MODEF since these farmers had joined MODEF more in order to attack the FNSEA than to support MODEF policies. Despite all efforts, it was impossible to retain them within the organization. One should note, however, that they were not expelled, they left of their own free will. The political deadlock of September 1977 was to mark a turning point in the hitherto relatively untroubled history of MODEF's internal life. It is clear that the rise of MODEF coincides with the development of the Union of the Left - from the first tentative noises of the late 1950s and early 1960s to the crescendo of 1974. Indeed, it is possible to regard MODEF as a precursor and path-breaker for the Union of the Left as a whole. Despite declarations of war-like intent from party leaderships, the activists in rural areas have been engaged in constant co-operation. To some extent this can be explained by the face-to-face nature of agricultural politics, and the almost schizophrenic attitude to the idea of "l'unité paysanne" - combatting it in practice whilst denouncing violations by opponents. But as Denis Lacorne has pointed out, it is downright misleading to view even the PCF as a monolith:

le PCF est parfaitement capable d'innover en adoptant avec succès un système d'action périphérique qui... tient le plus grand compte de circonstances et de situations locales, apparemment peu compatible avec une logique impérative de type leniniste.(71)

Indeed, one could go so far as to argue that at times the PCF has survived because its national directives have been ignored or transformed in practice by local militants. This helps to explain why the damage created by the break-up of the Union of the Left in September 1977 was not as disastrous as it might have been. Nevertheless, the demoralization and division within MODEF had significant effects. Firstly, as MODEF has always strongly insisted on the need for political change, the throwing away of such hopes in 1977 was particularly demoralizing. This forced the leadership to place greater emphasis on the need for, and the possibilities of, purely union activity. Though this was beneficial in the long-term by reducing the illusions held about the benefits of a left-wing government, in the short run it represented such a major U-turn that it was bound to create cynicism within MODEF. Secondly, the wider political quarrels between the parties and activists of the parties could not help but intrude into MODEF's deliberations. It was impossible to entirely prevent individuals carrying over their political differences into union discussions. This had two consequences; on the one hand, a certain number of PS members of MODEF dropped out - usually quietly, without launching an attack on MODEF or defecting to the FNSEA. The most prominent of these was Georges Sutra in the Hérault, once a member of the MODEF Executive Committee, and elected to the European Parliament on the PS list in 1979. On the other, MODEF suffered in electoral terms, since it admits a decline of four per cent in the number of MODEF votes cast in the 1979 professional elections by comparison with 1974.

The importance of local and regional leadership in limiting or creating further damage is shown by the fact that conflicts were much more severe in certain departments than in others. For instance, the Charente Federation weathered the storm relatively successfully, whilst the sectarianism which developed in the Vaucluse was enough to lose the MODEF Federation the Chamber of Agriculture seats at Apt and Orange, the latter having been held since 1964. Not only did PS activists quit MODEF, but the PCF leaders of MODEF also refused to respect the tradition of political balance on election slates.(72) While these differences can be accounted for, to some extent, by the differing political traditions of the Charente and Vaucluse, the key difference appeared to be the nature of the local leadership. The PCF members in the Charente leadership, led by Raymond Mineau, were, and are, much less involved in the departmental leadership of their party than are their counterparts in the Vaucluse.

At the national level, 1978 saw a change in the style of leadership to a much more overtly political stance - a change which coincided with the division of the Left. At MODEF's 1978 Conference the key post of general secretary was transferred from Raymond Mineau to Frederic Lindenstaedt.(73) To a large extent, the differences in style of leadership are a result of their differing personal histories. Mineau is the technical expert of MODEF, whose whole working life has been devoted to agricultural unionism since he became the administrative officer of the FDSEA of the Charente in 1947. Though his union career involved him in many political battles with the FNSEA leadership, they were not conducted in an explicitly political way. Finally, his base, the Charente, is a department where the Left have, until recently, been in a minority. A much greater discretion was called for on his part

when dealing with the farmers of the department. Frederic Lindenstaedt's career, on the other hand, has not been entirely involved in agriculture. Secretary-general of the Lot-et-Garonne Tenants and Sharecroppers Federation, and involved in the setting up of MODEF in the 1950s, he became secretary of the Lot-et-Garonne PCF Federation. Given the fact that the department has a much stronger leftist tradition, particularly amongst the farmers who provided Renaud Jean and the CGPT with their support, it is easily understandable that Lindenstaedt should see his job in a much more overtly political light.

These differences in style can be seen clearly if the pre-electoral period for the 1978 Parliamentary elections is compared with the 1981 Presidential election. In October 1977, Mineau pointed out in fairly neutral terms the dangers presented by a left-wing government:

Si un gouvernement de la gauche élu sur les promesses du Programme commun de la gauche essayait de maintenir meme partiellement l'austerité présente, il en résulterait un mécontentement tel qu'il pourrait être exploité par les actuels tenants du pouvoir non seulement pour y revenir en force mais pour essayer de s'y maintenir par tous les moyens.(74)

This was obviously an attack on the PS but it was a veiled one and there were no direct allegations against the PS. In 1981 Lindenstaedt was much more explicit. As we have seen, he denounced the socialist proposals concerning the "offices fonciers". But the language employed had nothing of the objectivity of Mineau in 1977. "Veut-on avec les offices fonciers se donner un air révolutionnaire mais en ne tordant pas un cheveu aux cumulards, gros possédants ou aux banques".(75) Similarly



he concentrated on the question of the extension of the Common Market, isolating three categories of Presidential candidates: the "Yes more or less" ("Vous pouvez tranquillement les rayer"), the "Yes buts" ("ces garanties ne sont qu'un trompe l'oeil. Vous ne pouvez pas donc suivre non plus cette catégorie de candidats"), and finally the "categoric Nos" ("Vous pouvez leur faire confiance pour défendre vos intérêts d'exploitants familiaux et l'agriculture française").(76) Perhaps the most sectarian attack was to argue, on the basis of a *Nouvel Observateur* flight of megalomania, that Mitterrand intended to make Claude Cheysson his Prime Minister. This was accompanied by a list of Cheysson's responsibilities in the EEC's attacks on French agriculture.(77)

The real difference between the two men is in their conception of the relations between parties and unions. Mineau has always acted as if MODEF has an important role to play in defending immediate economic interests, and in so doing allows its members to draw the obvious political conclusions. Lindenstaedt, on the other hand, acts as if political change is the primary objective of MODEF, and that there must be a much more assertive campaign of politicization if any political benefits for the PCF are to be gained from MODEF. Rather than sit back and let the members and activists draw their own conclusions, it is necessary to explain what these conclusions should be.

The great problem for the Lindenstaedt strategy is that greater politicization and identification with one particular party also brings about greater political differentiation. Instead of a vague populist idea of the Left as an undifferentiated whole, its policies have to be dissected and explained in detail. But in doing so, it is virtually impossible to avoid aligning oneself with a particular party. Even if

journalistic excesses are avoided (which they are not), such a strategy leads MODEF, or at least its general secretary, to be seen to be supporting the PCF. For example, pointing out the presence of such ambiguous characters as Claude Cheysson and Edgard Pisani in the entourage of Francois Mitterrand was merely a statement of fact. Posing the question of the suitability and reliability of such people for reforming agriculture in a socialist direction was at the same time a genuine question, and a polemical attack on the candidate of the PS.(78)

The evolution of MODEF's attitude to the Common Programme signed by the PS, the MRG and the PCF in 1972 provides a clear example of how MODEF's internal history has followed that of the Union of the Left. Unlike the CGT, MODEF refused to give a formal endorsement to the programme. Nevertheless, it welcomed the agreement with open arms:

L'examen du Programme commun de gouvernement établi par les partis socialiste et communiste fait ressortir de nombreux points de convergence avec le programme national du MODEF... Entre le Programme commun et celui du MODEF n'apparaît aucune opposition notable d'autant plus que la référence en maintes occasions à la consultation des intéressés laisse présager de larges possibilités de négociation....(79)

But when the Union of the Left broke down this confidence evaporated. Going further than the PCF, who denounced the PS for reneging on its commitments and swinging to the Right, MODEF's general secretary argued that some of the Common Programme was unacceptable anyway. As we have seen already, this criticism was based on the issue of property rights. Lindenstaedt claimed that MODEF had severely criticized the "office

foncier" proposal when it was first adopted in 1972. However, since no such criticisms were made publicly in 1972 it seems that the motives behind this quarrel had more to do with party politics than with the formal concerns of MODEF. It was an attempt to outflank the PS, contrasting it unfavourably with the PCF, by stressing the more conservative aspects of MODEF ideology. This was so clear that the PS members of the leadership revolted against the facade of unanimity and forced a vote for the first time in years.

The socialists in the MODEF leadership seem to have shared Francois Mitterrand's explanation of the behaviour of the PCF in the pre-electoral period. "Le PC n'a qu'une pensée: le premier tour des présidentielles et son rang par rapport au PS. Cette obsession le poujadise".(80) According to one leading socialist in MODEF, the behaviour of the PCF MODEF leaders was merely a temporary aberration - a panic-stricken response to Georges Marchais' low standing in opinion polls. Once the elections had passed, the communists would, it was believed, return to their normal selves.(81) This appears to have been the case. Without the pressure of the elections, and with the realization that such overtly partisan behaviour was counter-productive, the concern with the unity of the organization again became predominant. Indeed the socialist and non-communist response to the increasing politicization was surprisingly muted. There was little open conflict whilst dissidents generally left quietly.

There was, nevertheless, a PS attempt to undermine MODEF by setting up an alternative organization. The MONATAR was intended to play the same role for the PS which it was presumed that MODEF was fulfilling for the PCF. Based on a misconception of the complexities of the political and

personal alliances involved in MODEF, this was doomed to failure. This plan, hatched in the over-fevered imaginations of the party's agricultural experts, proved a disaster. On the one hand, socialist farmers were suspicious, since it would have been much more of a satellite organization of the PS than MODEF is of the PCF. On the other, many socialists within MODEF do not accept that it is dominated by the PCF. There was, therefore, no need to quit an established organization, within which they occupied positions of influence and responsibility, to create an untried and even more politicized union. It is apparent that many MODEF socialists are not convinced of the competence and knowledge of the party's agricultural experts.(82)

To a large extent, MODEF's survival was a result of the existence of certain loyalties which cut across party lines, of the conscious efforts of many national and departmental leaders, and of the convenient lack of interest in politics amongst its membership. In Chapter 2 it was argued that the Resistance was an essential pre-condition for the creation of MODEF. The contacts and friendships established during the Resistance not only permitted the creation of MODEF but safeguarded its existence from the perils of political polemics. Many MODEF activists of the Resistance generation have more in common with their union colleagues of other parties than they do with younger members of their own parties. For instance, in interviews with leaders of the Charente Federation, many offensive remarks were made about the other parties of the Left, but Resistance friends were excluded from the general condemnation.(83)

MODEF has always argued that political parties and unions are two distinct types of organization, involving distinct types of language and practice. Obviously, to the extent that professional organization is

concerned with putting pressure on the state, this dichotomy is violated in practice and can never be more than a moral imperative. But there is a definite sense within MODEF of the limitations on the acceptable subjects for discussion and, more importantly, on the way in which they can be discussed. This line was drawn by one MODEF leader in the Charente as the distinction between "la politique économique" and "la politique politicienne".(84) The former relates directly to agriculture and its problems, and is therefore a legitimate object of MODEF's attention, whilst the latter is concerned with the ephemera of day-to-day politics, which are considered not only as a waste of time but also as a source of disruption. It is, of course, impossible to define rigidly into which category a particular issue falls. But it provides a rough standard by which to judge the receivability of an issue, and the acceptability of individual behaviour. Violators of the code are swiftly brought to heel, since not only do they endanger the unity of the organization in general but they also inhibit the search for unanimity on specific issues which is a hallmark of MODEF.

This self-imposed censorship is perhaps Raymond Mineau's greatest contribution to the development of MODEF, even more important than his tireless organizational work since 1959. It is no accident that the Federations furthest removed from his influence, those in the south-east, were the ones which experienced the greatest problems during 1977-81. Within the Charente Federation, he is unanimously regarded as the man who ensured that the Federation escaped relatively unscathed, through his determination to prevent political arguments of any sort.(85) For instance, during a lobby of the Charente MSA and its president, Mineau personally brought to order a MODEF leader who tried

to politicize the discussion by blaming multinational capital for the problems of the MSA. Another MRG MODEF leader claimed that in the thirty-five years he had known Mineau he never had a political discussion with him.(86) It is largely due to this apoliticism that MODEF was transformed from a grouplet into a national organization capable of weathering the political vicissitudes of the Left, and into an established organization capable of outliving its founders.

The other side of the story is the lack of interest in politics, and particularly in party politics, prevalent not only amongst the members and supporters but also amongst the activists. The clientelistic nature of MODEF support has helped to put a brake on political conflict within the organization. A great deal of the work of MODEF's local leaders consists of sorting out individual problems, so there is a natural tendency to neglect political argument. Since MODEF leaders derive their legitimacy more from their role as social workers rather than as political theorists, they are constrained by their supporters to avoid political discussions; otherwise they risk alienating the latter through boredom, or by attributing to themselves a political competence which is not recognized by local farmers. Furthermore, MODEF activists themselves are not necessarily interested in national politics. Not only do party members spend very little time talking about such matters, but rural politics is often a politics of personalities, immediate interest and ritual denunciation of those who belong to another clique. It is not so much ignorance which is at work, but the expression of a positive distaste for national party politics.

Finally, there is one other element which helped to limit the damage. The increasing politicization under the leadership of Lindenstaedt brought about its own remedy. Socialists within MODEF began to use their numerical strength to greater effect in order to extend their influence within the organization. In some places, the PS over-reached themselves in a concerted effort to impose its members in MODEF leadership positions - an effort so overt that it was blocked by the PCF and non-PS leaders. This was the case in the Vaucluse and in the FNJ Federation in the Charente.(87) The defeat of such attempts led some of those involved to drop out of MODEF. However, the majority of MODEF socialists were aware that to try and play the PCF at its own game was a recipe for disaster, splitting the organization but without taking control of the remains. An intermediate position was established. Whereas in the past the political composition of national, departmental and local leaderships was not considered a priority, a realization grew that political balance between PCF, PS, MRG and non-aligned must be maintained at all levels, particularly in the departments and communes. The classic example of the crystallization of tendencies within MODEF is the setting up of the political triumvirate, consisting of presidents belonging to the PS, the PCF and the MRG, to head the organization in 1978. The net result of the PCF attempt to increase its influence within MODEF was to weaken its position by over-reaching itself, thus coming to occupy a less uncontested position in the leadership than when it was more discreet.

One aspect of MODEF's politicization which must be mentioned is the fact that throughout the 1970s, the political ambitions of MODEF leaders of all parties have been encouraged. The logic behind this is that it is much harder to accuse MODEF of being a PCF satellite if it can point to

the presence of elected representatives of other parties in its leadership. For example, the MRG president of the Charente Federation admits that this was one of the considerations which led him to become a conseiller general.(88) This strategy had two unexpected advantages for the post-Union of the Left MODEF . On the one hand, political energies are channelled outwards. On the other, party members within MODEF are forced to moderate their behaviour, since they have to appeal to all sections of the Left in their search for election or re-election. A PS conseiller general dependent on PCF and MRG votes for his re-election would be more wary of upsetting his MODEF colleagues than the rank-and-file party activist.

#### 6. THE PARTIES AND MODEF

MODEF always made a formal show, until the late 1970s, of maintaining relations with all parties. MODEF has met with the parliamentary groups of each party. In practice, MODEF is much closer to the parties of the Left and to the PCF in particular. The parties of the Right have had a somewhat ambiguous attitude to MODEF. Though right-wing governments persistently refused to recognize MODEF, there have been meetings between MODEF delegations and right-wing Parliamentary groups.(89) Some centre-right deputies have seen no harm in talking to MODEF, since they realized the dangers involved in equating MODEF with the PCF. This is the sort of argument which can quickly become self-fulfilling. To dismiss MODEF and, by extension, the legitimacy of its concerns, was to risk driving the discontented farmer into the hands of the PCF. The attempt to accommodate MODEF has been limited, both sides having few



illusions about the motives of the other. If MODEF ever had any illusion about its potential influence on the parties of the Right, this was dispelled in 1969. MODEF was particularly galled by the refusal of Jacques Duhamel, the Minister of Agriculture, to continue the discussions begun by Jacques Duhamel, the president of the Progres et Democratie Moderne parliamentary group.(90) For MODEF, such liberal double talk was worse than the kind of overtly hostile diatribe received from a right-wing Loiret deputy:

Mais autant je suis résolu à agir, autant que je ne suis pas mûr pour appuyer la propagande communiste... il faut vraiment une certaine dose des adhérents du MODEF pour attendre le salut des communistes alors que la première chose qu'ils font en prenant le pouvoir, c'est d'abolir la propriété.(91)

The prevalence of this conspiracy theory of politics - that all protest is inspired by the PCF - is characteristic of the Giscardian arrogance which prevented the Right from expanding its audience as it had done up to and including 1974. MODEF drew the conclusion that even a simulated dialogue was no longer possible when it decided not to bother sending a questionnaire to right-wing deputies, since they had already made their attitude clear by supporting the government.(92)

The position of the PS has been of more concern to MODEF. The most striking thing about the PS attitude to agriculture was the complete absence of a position on farmers' unions.(93) Except for the denunciation of the political role of the FNSEA leadership, there was no preference given to any agricultural organization. Indeed, unlike the PCF, there was not even any insistence on the need for farmers to belong to a union at all. PS literature contented itself with analysis of

right-wing policies, its own counter-propositions and the need to join and support the PS. Changes in agricultural policy were to be engineered through the election of a socialist government. Once again, this is an example of the way that the Left in France underestimates the possibilities of unions. This can be seen as a reflection of the weaknesses of unionism, which is itself a function of this lack of confidence. More importantly, it represents a reaction against the exaggerated claims of the syndicalist tradition, and the need to legitimize the primary role of the party. The party is seen as the legitimate source of authority. Intermediary groups are seen as obstacles, problems to be neutralized rather than potential allies. This is the gist of Mitterrand's criticisms of the CFDT. This kind of party Jacobinism leads some of the PS to prefer a disorganized opposition to an organized ally capable of making its own demands on a socialist government.(94) In the case of the farmers, their ambiguous class position only seems to heighten the distrust - a distrust which has existed in certain parts of the socialist movement since its birth.(95) The low status of unionism also reflects and justifies the weakness of the PS outside the purely political sphere. With exceptions such as Lille and Marseille, PS activists have not been present in the wide range of social, cultural, and only marginally political associations which provide a party with a sufficiently firm basis to withstand major political and electoral setbacks.(96) It is only recently that the PS has begun to think seriously about this problem. But given that most of this thinking has been done by the Rocardian minority, there is resistance to accepting this fact.(97) Finally, the PS faced a practical problem. The limited number of its activist farmers were widely dispersed in the various organizations. Explicit support, for instance, given to a presence in the FNSEA would alienate

the MODEF members in the PS and vice versa. In order to maintain its clienteles, the party was constrained to silence on this question.

Unfortunately for the PS, this absence of a policy did not prevent it from intervening in a haphazard and often counter-productive way. The best example was its ill-considered attempt to set up its own satellite. But normal PS procedure was to launch its individual members into orbit in the leadership of the competing unions in a completely unco-ordinated way. The way in which individual Federations and activists were left to their own devices had some unfortunate results. A particularly incompetent move was made by the Vaucluse PS Federation in 1976. Just before the Chamber of Agriculture elections, the Federation issued a statement calling on farmers to support the candidates in each list who happened to be socialists. Since this meant splitting one's vote between MODEF and the FDSEA, both organizations were highly offended. The PS was made the villain of the piece, accused of politicizing elections where such considerations are theoretically out of order. The fact that these elections were highly political did not excuse the PS for making such an open intervention. This allowed the PCF to present themselves as the defenders of independent unionism, and to strengthen their position within MODEF, whilst the FDSEA socialists were undermined in the eyes of their colleagues.(98)

The PCF's attitude to MODEF, is of course, the most important question. It has already been seen in Chapter 2 that the party has not given all-out support to MODEF. Though MODEF has enjoyed close relations with the PCF parliamentary group, with Andre Soury (deputy for Confolens) in the Assembly, and Louis Minetti (senator for the Bouches-du-Rhône) in

the Senate effectively seen as spokesmen for MODEF, there is a large area of doubt about how seriously the PCF takes agriculture in general and MODEF in particular. All the signs indicate that the PCF devotes little time or interest to agriculture. If PCF literature encourages farmers to join unions, and in particular MODEF, the party makes little effort in practice. Even party members can be found in FDSEAs who are locked in a bitter conflict with MODEF. Furthermore, senior MODEF officials have complained privately about the lack of support which the PCF gives them. They feel that the PCF could provide more assistance in helping MODEF with organizational tasks without jeopardizing the independence of MODEF. Similarly, the party press is not particularly active in prosecuting the claims of MODEF. Articles about agriculture in L'Humanité are as rare as they are in the rest of the national press. Other parts of the party press are no less happy to ignore agriculture. For instance, there was no full-length article on agriculture in Economie et Politique between 1976 and 1982. Even in Cahiers du Communisme, which had a better record in the past, articles on agriculture became progressively rarer. Most of these articles consist of party analysis of the agricultural crisis, and proposals for its resolution. Robert Jonis' article on the Gard is exceptional in that it deals with the concrete problems of organizing in agriculture. Indeed the article itself stresses how agriculture has fallen into neglect within the party.(99)

Michel Rocard once accused the PCF of treating farmers as "une force d'appoint".(100) This is most clearly indicated by the role which farmers and MODEF members play in national party positions. No MODEF member sits on the Central Committee. But more significantly, of the eighty-eight deputies elected in 1978, only Andre Lajoinie (Allier),

Andre Soury (Charente), Hubert Ruffe (Lot-et-Garonne) and Andre Tourne (Pyrénées Orientales) had been farmers at some stage in their careers. Only three others, all former agricultural labourers, Pierre Girardot (Alpes de Haute Provence), Paul Balmigère (Hérault), and Jacques Chaminade (Corrèze) had any connection with farming.(101) When one considers that at least a quarter of the eighty-eight seats were in essentially rural constituencies, one sees the imbalance between farmers' support for the PCF and the interest of the PCF in farmers as activists and leaders.

Within the PCF agriculture has been left to party specialists and the activists who happen to be farmers. The existence of La Terre, and the greater place given to agriculture in La Marseillaise and L'Echo du Centre, are judged adequate compensation for the gaps in mainstream national publications. This is, of course, nothing new. Renaud Jean was obliged to spend a large part of his time convincing his comrades that his efforts, and those of the CGPT, were ideologically acceptable and politically worthwhile.(102) What is new is that this partition between the farmers and the rest of the party has coincided with a strategy of Left Union designed to unite all categories of the exploited and oppressed against state monopoly capitalism.(103) Though one cannot deny the value of La Terre to the party, such reliance on it seems a curious way to cement the worker-farmer alliance.

Michel Rocard attempted to explain this division in the PCF in the following way:

Pour le PCF, l'agriculture reste une activité secondaire, et la paysannerie un milieu irréductiblement attaché à des valeurs bourgeoises telles que la propriété... La révolution socialiste sera faite par la classe ouvrière, et les petits paysans n'y auront leur place que s'ils acceptent d'y jouer le rôle de force d'appoint...(104)

This explanation is untenable for three reasons. When accusing the PCF of defending the bourgeois values of farmers, one has to be aware of the possibility that the PCF is using the farmer to justify its own bourgeois values. Secondly, the PCF effectively abandoned revolutionary politics in 1944 and did so formally in the mid-1960s. It is therefore doubtful that the concept of socialist revolution influences the conduct of the party. Finally, the PCF appeals to all its non-working class clienteles in terms of their own self-interest, rather than in terms of an altruistic desire for political change.

It is this last factor which provides the key to the explanation of the partitions within the party. Since the primary concern of the party in the Fifth Republic has been the defence of particularistic interests, these divisions are necessary to prevent the various audiences suspecting that their short-term interests may be contradictory.(105) Furthermore, there is a conflict between the defence of short-term interests, and the strategy of long-term unity of the exploited. This is the old dichotomy between reform and revolution, but with the PCF on the reformist side of the divide. Given the intense but partial politicization of the section of the working class organized by the PCF, it is hardly surprising that the defence of its immediate interests prevails and its leaders are the ones to take up leadership positions in

the party. "Le PCF a donc hérité de cette mentalité patrimoniale qui refuse les risques d'une conquête pour préserver l'acquis".(106) But in the context of a deepening economic crisis, the conflict between the two aspects of the strategy increases. To safeguard itself, the PCF has to retreat towards its "forteresse assiégée".(107) Its role becomes restricted to "le parti qui défend les intérêts de la classe ouvrière dans le système tel qu'il est".(108) The influence of the agricultural wing of the party therefore declines. It was such considerations which put paid to the abortive "union du peuple de France". Quite simply, according to Jean Rony, the working class would not accept such class collaboration, since it hindered it in the pursuit, or defence, of short-term interests.(109)

The lack of attention which both the major parties of the Left pay to MODEF indicates that MODEF's importance to them, if any, is not primarily electoral. If that were the case, MODEF leaders would have a much greater role to play within parties, instead of being confined to specialist committees as they have been. In fact, MODEF serves as a reservoir for both the PCF and the PS, and to a lesser extent, the MRG - a reservoir of political talent for departmental leadership positions. MODEF provides its activists with the indispensable political skills of organization, public speaking, etc. Once this has been done, the parties can use their most prominent members in MODEF for their own purposes. At one level, MODEF helps to train party cadres for leadership of the departmental Federation. The picture is more complex in the PS, where factionalism abounds, but in any department with a significant MODEF Federation, there are MODEF leaders in the Federal Committee of the PCF. Examples include Raymond Mineau in the Charente, Camille Fare and Georges Sabatier in the Vaucluse, along with other

leading MODEF officials in the Côtes-du-Nord, Landes, Bouches-du-Rhône, etc. Similarly, where the MRG represent a significant minority of farmers, MODEF leaders are to be found in the leadership of the MRG Federation. For example, in the Charente, one of MODEF's vice presidents became vice president of the MRG Federation whilst MODEF's president served as Michel Crépeau's official representative in the department during the 1981 Presidential elections. Whilst these officials are not directly nominated by MODEF, they do ensure that the concerns of MODEF are made known to a wider audience, and that the leaders of MODEF are integrated into the political life of the department.

More importantly, MODEF helps to train potential elected representatives. In the early days of MODEF, its leaders tended to be established elected representatives, such as conseillers généraux, mayors and assistant mayors. For example, one of MODEF's founding members - Marcel Sintas in the Landes - was already a mayor and conseiller général and only lost his seat on the Conseil Général in 1982. The original leadership of the Charente Federation included a large contingent of mayors and assistant mayors from villages such as Ste-Sévère (Jarnac), Boutiers St. Trojan (Cognac-Nord), Vindelle (Hiersac), Baignes (Baignes) and Exideuil (Chabanais). (110) As time wore on, younger men emerged to take over MODEF. During the 1970s there was an increasing tendency for people who had made their reputation in MODEF to stand for political office. Of the three national presidents of MODEF, only Mineau has never stood for political office. His socialist colleague Henri Dofny was conseiller général for Castelnaudary in the Aude between 1976-1982, whilst the MRG Pierre Desigors was a mayor and conseiller général in the Eure. Of the remainder of the



national leadership, many have held local political office. André Cantiran was elected as an assistant mayor in the Landes, and was the "suppléant" to the PS deputy between 1973-78. Emilien Soulié has been a long-serving mayor of Montblanc in the Hérault, whilst the treasurer Franck Marcade is a mayor and conseiller general for Pouillon in the Landes. Departmental leaderships follow the same pattern. In 1976-79, two of the four farmers elected to the Charente Conseil Général were MODEF leaders. MODEF's president was elected for the MRG in the canton of Hiersac, whilst a socialist vice president beat the sitting deputy-mayor at Cognac-Sud. Unsuccessful candidates included MODEF members of the PS at Villefagnan, and of the MRG at Rouillac. The great political success story of MODEF in the department is, of course, the PCF deputy for Confolens, Andre Soury, a former member of MODEF. In other departments a similar situation exists. In the Vaucluse, the two most prominent MODEF leaders became mayors and conseillers généraux during the 1970s. Georges Sabatier became mayor and conseiller général for Bollène, a largely working class town of 10,000 inhabitants, whilst Camille Fare was elected mayor and conseiller général for Beaumes-de-Venise. Georges Sabatier was also the "suppléant" of Fernand Marin, the PCF deputy for Orange until 1981. Indeed, of the three PCF candidates in June 1981, two had MODEF "suppléants" - Sabatier at Orange, and Rene Richaud, mayor of Goult, in the constituency of Carpentras. Finally, slightly further south, a MODEF leader became mayor of Noves, the "suppléant" for the constituency of Arles, and unsuccessfully contested the cantonal elections of 1982 in the heart of "la Vendée provençale" -Chateaufrenard.

This list could be extended indefinitely, particularly with the much larger numbers of mayors in the ranks of MODEF. The important point to make is that there is a process of "cross-legitimation" at work. Lacorne has used this concept to explain the relations between PCF mayors and their party. "La réussite de l'élue renforce la légitimité du parti... la caution du parti renforce l'autorité du militant".(111) This is precisely what happens with MODEF. The political success of its leaders lends the organization greater credibility and provides it with a wider audience, whilst this success is dependent on the credibility and notoriety such leaders gain from their position in MODEF.(112) This suggests that, despite the abuse of right-wing governments, MODEF itself has a certain degree of popular legitimacy.

This also demonstrates that MODEF is not a group of people alienated from the political system. In fact, many of its members participate extensively in the elected apparatuses of the state. To the extent that they are alienated from the political system, this stems from their exclusion from the more powerful technocratic and administrative agencies. This exclusion is not a subjective refusal to participate, but a reflection of the class aspect of these agencies which limits the type of people whose involvement can be accommodated.

It should not be assumed that the political emergence of MODEF leaders into elected office is entirely to MODEF's advantage. On the positive side, these office holders are able to facilitate MODEF's work. For example, a MODEF leader who also chairs the Agricultural Committee of the Conseil Général can ensure that the MODEF Federation receives a grant. Furthermore, their offices provide them with a platform where what they say is taken more seriously precisely because they have been

legitimized by election. On the negative side, there is the problem of overt politicization, and explicit identification with the parties of the Left which has already been discussed. Perhaps more importantly, such political successes create a manpower problem for MODEF. If it is possible to be a mayor of a small rural commune, or even conseiller général, and to remain active in MODEF, this becomes virtually impossible for someone elected in even small towns such as Bollène (10,000 inhabitants) or Noves (6,000). The mayors of these towns found themselves to be so occupied by these posts that they had to abandon their MODEF positions. The danger that its most prominent leaders will be hi-jacked by the parties is a real one.(113) Given the relative priority accorded to the parties, all MODEF can really hope for is that such people will have prepared their successors before they move on to higher things. There have been signs that this problem is beginning to be seen as such with MODEF leaders restraining any political ambitions they might have. For example, one of MODEF's leaders in the Vaucluse withdrew from the united Left slate between the two ballots of the 1977 municipal elections of Apt in order to avoid becoming deputy mayor.(114)

## 7. CONCLUSION

Given the evidence, it is impossible to equate MODEF with the agricultural wing of the PCF. A satellite organization which cannot openly support its alleged parent body is not much of a satellite. On the other hand, given the presence of so many PCF activists in MODEF, particularly amongst its leaders, it would be surprising if MODEF's operations did not resemble those of the PCF. Apart from the ideological similarities which have already been discussed, there are two major convergences with the PCF. The first is the emphasis on a defensive strategy, to defend what has been rather than to create what might be.(115) The other is the clientelistic nature of MODEF's own behaviour, and the way in which the PCF deal with their electorate as individuals:(116)

L'élú joue un grand rôle pour soulager la peine, la misère notamment des plus humbles. Il est exaltant d'aider les pauvres, les diminués, ceux qui ont le plus besoin de nous, ceux qui mettent en nous tout leur confiance

Written by a former worker, and Politbureau member, this sentiment has been expressed innumerable times by MODEF leaders.(117)

It is interesting to contrast MODEF with another organization widely regarded as a PCF satellite - the CGT. Both have normally insisted upon political change as the only way in which the long-term interests of their supporters can be safeguarded.(118) This, of course, involves accepting the ultimate leadership of a political party - the PCF. Both avoid treading on the party's toes by refusing to take initiatives for

which the PCF feels it ought to be responsible. Thus policy proposals are not accompanied by costing, neither are they placed in order of priority. Where they cannot or do not wish to openly align themselves with the PCF, they are careful not to adopt positions which would contradict those of the party.(119)

It is here that the similarities stop. Despite the populist rhetoric of the Union of the Left or the "Union du peuple de France", the industrial working class is the predominant force within the PCF. Unlike those of the CGT, MODEF leaders are not also national leaders of the PCF. The relative lack of interest in MODEF displayed by the party, and the consequent exclusion of MODEF leaders, permits MODEF a greater autonomy. It should, of course, be remembered that this autonomy is also due to the fact that MODEF supporters demand such freedom from political constraints. The fact that this autonomy is genuine is best demonstrated by the contrast between the behaviour of the leaders of the CGT and MODEF during the 1977-1981 state of open warfare between the parties of the Left. The infrequent and veiled attacks made by MODEF leaders on the PS paled into insignificance when compared to the shock tactics of Georges Séguy and Henri Krasucki. The total anti-PS commitment of the CGT leadership throws a great deal of light on the relative independence of MODEF, and on the differing role which the two organizations play within the politics of the Left. The main political role of the CGT is one of electoral mobilization on behalf of the PCF. MODEF has a much less important but much more elitist role - the recruitment and training of rural leaders for the parties of the Left.

## CHAPTER 8    RESISTANCE TO CORPORATISM: MODEF AND THE STATE

### 1.   INTRODUCTION

The last chapter revealed that MODEF is deeply involved in certain parts of the political process. Generalizations about MODEF activists as political alienates have been shown to be untenable. The evidence above suggests that efforts to explain agricultural protest as a protest against the state itself must be abandoned in favour of the approach of certain historians and political scientists who emphasize the high level of political participation amongst farmers.(1)

Given this starting point, this chapter will be concerned with the detailed examination of the response of the state and its constituent parts to MODEF and MODEF's attitude to the various parts of the state apparatus. On the first point, the non-neutrality of the state, and in particular of the components of the state and their relative strengths, will be demonstrated. On the latter, it will become evident that MODEF does not have a global Poujadist-style hostility to the state in all its manifestations but that its attitude depends on its appreciation of the class content of particular arms of the state.

The final section will be concerned with the theoretical implications of the example of MODEF and the French state for the analysis of pressure groups in general. It is of particular interest in answering the question of why corporatist institutions have had such little success in France.

### 2.   THE STATE VERSUS MODEF

The official attitude to MODEF crystallized after the Presidential election of 1965. Though no love was lost between MODEF and the Gaullist government, Edgard Pisani remained the only Minister of Agriculture to meet MODEF (voluntarily) until the accession to office of Edith Cresson in May 1981. This unusual attempt at conciliation by Pisani can be explained as at result of his awareness that the 1964 Chamber of Agriculture elections had demonstrated that MODEF's audience was wider than that of the PCF and it had indeed made substantial inroads in right-wing strongholds such as the Vendee. Of particular importance was the position of the FNSEA. In more or less open opposition to Pisani, its protests against the violation of its monopoly went unheeded. Pisani had no more goodwill left to lose.(2)

However, this brief interlude of liberalism soon gave way to a more rigidly hostile approach. For some fifteen years each successive Minister of Agriculture denounced MODEF as a PCF front and denied, despite all the evidence to the contrary, its representativity. MODEF was to be surrounded by a cordon sanitaire in order to prevent the spectre of communism from spreading throughout the countryside.

Three typical examples of the official attitude from the three tendencies of the right follow. In 1969, the centrist Jacques Duhamel denied a MODEF request for a meeting. "Je ne puis aujourd'hui étendre mes consultations à d'autres organisations dont le caractère représentatif au plan national et strictement professionnel n'est pas démontré".(3) Three years later, Jacques Chirac characteristically launched a particularly virulent attack on MODEF:

Il s'agit là d'une cuistrerie qui dépasse toutes les bornes. Il est scandaleux qu'une organisation qui se réclame d'une philosophie

collectiviste, prétende défendre autrement que par esprit tactique, l'exploitation familiale.(4)

Finally, the Giscardian Christian Bonnet stated firmly in 1975:

dans le domaine des organisations professionnelles agricoles comme dans celles des syndicats ouvriers, la représentativité ne se décerne pas: elle se constate. Il existe des organismes tenus représentatifs sur le plan national, d'autres qui ne le sont pas. Tel était hier, tel demeure aujourd'hui le cas du MODEF.(5)

The attitude of these guardians of the Fifth Republic is a perfect example of the old proverb - "None so blind as he that will not see". In election after election, MODEF has demonstrated its ability to secure a significant proportion of the vote in professional elections, despite the great imbalance in the means available to MODEF and those of the FNSEA. As MODEF loses no opportunity to point out, it secures a greater proportion of the vote than does either Force Ouvrière (FO) or the Confederation Française du Travail Chrétienne (CFTC) in industrial elections.(6) This double standard suggests that the non-recognition of MODEF was basically a political decision rather than one based on any objective legal or administrative criteria. The reasons behind this policy are of three types; differences of political culture, partisan electoral concerns, and the corporatist alliance between the governments of the Right and the FNSEA.

MODEF operates in a different sub-culture from the Ministers and administrators with which it is confronted. MODEF is an integral part of the "representative" sub-culture, a sub-culture relegated to the background by the dominant "technocratic" ethos of the Fifth Republic.



MODEF's values are almost diametrically opposed to those of officialdom. On the one hand, MODEF is committed to the idea of mass participation in political life. On the other, the state is staffed by people who believe that their expertise makes them the best qualified to make political decisions. Grémion has pointed out how civil servants have come to believe that they are the only people able to make rational decisions.(7) In fact this technocratic attitude extends from activists to cover elected representatives. According to Chevallier, the Ecole National d'Administration (ENA) has played a major role in bringing top civil servants around to the view that:

la décision... est une véritable science qui ne peut plus être abandonné au caprice et à l'arbitraire des élus, qui n'ont ni la hauteur de vues, ni la liberté de jugement, ni la compétence indispensables pour se prononcer en connaissance de cause.(8)

A similar dichotomy exists between MODEF's emphasis on the need for accountable leaders and the technocratic concern with efficiency. Instead of slow decision-making processes allowing for consultation and negotiation, private sector management techniques have been widely adopted by the Fifth Republic administration.(9) According to Peyrefitte, this has been legitimized by the argument that "il ne convient pas de compromettre l'autorité de l'Etat dans des discussions d'où elle ne peut sortir qu'affaiblie".(10)

Thirdly, there is a gulf between MODEF's emphasis on practical knowledge of concrete situations and the state's concern with formal education and universally applicable rules. Crozier has pointed out the liking of administrative bureaucracies for formal and impersonal rules whilst Samuel Beer has described the difficulties which diversity of situations

creates for "technocratic centralism and its rationalist assumptions on universality".(11)

Finally, MODEF's ideology has been characterized by a concentration on social questions and the defence of existing rights. The Fifth Republic, on the other hand, has been mainly concerned with economic problems and particularly with the pursuit of economic growth. Once again Chevallier's article helps to throw light on official hostility to MODEF:

Le discours de fonctionnaire se caractérise par un schéma d'opposition dichotomique, manichéenne, entre passé/avenir, traditionnel/moderne. Alors que le passé était auparavant porteur des valeurs fondamentales de la société, qu'il fallait à tout prix sauvegarder, il n'est plus jamais évoqué positivement: il n'apparaît que comme un frein qu'il faut débloquer, facteur de retard qu'il faut neutraliser.(12)

The consequence of these cultural differences meant that any meaningful participation by MODEF was impossible. Leaving aside substantive differences over policy, participation by MODEF in decision-making was ruled out because of the lack of a mutually comprehensible language. Since MODEF could not make any contribution which would make sense to ministers and officials, their presence was not only superfluous but also downright disruptive. The example of the Plan supports this point. Even where the political balance of forces is such that oppositional organizations like the CGT are invited to participate in decision-making, their presence is either marginal or disruptive. In the words of Stephen Cohen: "The trade unionists feel like interlopers in some club or family meeting. Their presence is cheerfully tolerated.

But they do not participate".(13)

Similarly, since MODEF are seen as representatives of the past, they are regarded as an expression of the problems caused by modernization of agriculture rather than as an organization with the potential to assist in resolving these problems. In practice, as Chevallier argues, this leads the state to "s'engager aux côtés des groupes économiques et sociaux dont l'action peut contribuer à atteindre l'objectif de transformation et de modernisation".(14) This last point leads on to a consideration of the class divisions which 'underpin' the mutual hostility of MODEF and the state. At the more sophisticated level of analysis, writers such as Poulantzas and Offe have tried to analyze the role of the state in terms of the interests which it serves.(15) In the literature quoted above, it has been generally accepted that the prime objective of the state under the Fifth Republic has been to ensure economic growth within a capitalist framework. But in pursuing economic growth, the interests of each class differ from others. Whilst the promoters of growth may gain, those who have to do the growing may not be quite so enthusiastic since they may gain little or even find their existence undermined - as in the case of many farmers. Obviously such divergent interests militate against negotiation and compromise.

But the factor which closed and bolted the door against any accommodation with MODEF was the secondary conflict between MODEF and the individuals who staff the state. Though the instrumentalist approach of writers such as Miliband and Birnbaum has been much maligned, particularly and paradoxically by those who stress the "relative autonomy of the political", it is of value in explaining the case of MODEF.(16) The differences in class interests have been accentuated by the ideological gap arising from the confrontation of a

highly-educated, self-perpetuating, Parisian elite of politicians and administrators and a less educated group of part-time provincial activists.

Technocratic Jacobinism and provincial populism have never been able to achieve a compromise. The false clarity of the ideology held by officialdom and MODEF led them to stress the differences and neglect the possible areas of compromise. For the former, compromise involved setting a dubious precedent, for the latter, compromise meant betrayal. Each over-estimated the other's strength. For the state one compromise meant a capitulation, for MODEF the state was too strong for it to be obliged to compromise on any essential issues. As an example of the uselessness of the structural-functionalist approach, French politics is particularly illuminating. The aspects of its political culture which have been most heavily emphasized have been those which encourage class conflict, by stressing differences and grand designs rather than the day-to-day political give-and-take which was the dominant religion in other advanced democracies during most of the post-war period.

MODEF's close association with the Left in general, and the PCF in particular, ensured that the policy of government and administration towards MODEF would be formulated with partisan considerations in mind. The belief that MODEF was merely the PCF under a less disreputable guise was convenient for Ministers and officials. The strategy of ghettoization of the PCF was extended to include its satellite organizations, of which MODEF was deemed to be one. This ghettoization policy was essential for right-wing hegemony by helping to prevent an effective political challenge from the Left. In refusing to recognize the legitimacy of the PCF, as an actor in the political system, whilst at the same time permitting the non-communist Left to act as a dynastic

opposition, the Right was able to drive a wedge between the communist and non-communist Left, a wedge deeper than their political differences alone could have created. It has already been seen in Chapter 6 how socialists and other potential dissidents in the FNSEA were encouraged to isolate themselves from the PCF.

With the growth of the Union of the Left in the 1970s, official intransigence towards MODEF was confirmed. To legitimize MODEF by recognition was to begin to recognize the legitimacy of the Union of the Left as an alternative government, and the Common Programme as an alternative political and economic strategy - a step which most of the Right assiduously avoided even after the 1981 elections. In effect, MODEF was a (not entirely unwilling) pawn in the conflict between the apparently eternal right-wing majority and the Left addicted to opposition. In this way, the identification of MODEF with the PCF became something of a self-fulfilling prediction whilst MODEF ensured that its accusations about government unresponsiveness were justified.

Finally, if the resolve of Ministers weakened, the FNSEA was there to encourage them. Any backsliding on the part of governments on the question of the FNSEA monopoly was greeted by howls of outrage from the leadership of the FNSEA. In Chapter 6, the importance of the monopoly of representation as a mechanism of control has been described. Even after the defeat of the right-wing allies of the FNSEA leadership in 1981, it attempted to blackmail the government into maintaining this monopoly. In June 1981, Francois Guillaume threatened not to attend the Annual Agricultural Conference if MODEF was invited.<sup>(17)</sup> This particular threat was not carried out but the new-found militancy of the FNSEA was partly inspired by the leadership's need to prove to the Mauroy government that it was the real force in agricultural

politics.(18)

The official boycott of MODEF was faithfully reflected by television and radio. Their policy was to ignore MODEF rather than attack it, since to attack MODEF would be to give it publicity which it could not gain by its own means. Implicitly, the heads of radio and television accepted the existence of widespread contempt for their institutions. To attack an organization such as MODEF was to risk giving it greater credibility and legitimacy. This attitude involved ORTF and its successors in some ridiculous incidents. In 1969, Alfred Nègre made a brief appearance on television to denounce the Mansholt Plan. The consequent attacks on the ORTF from the FNSEA and right-wing politicians, with Interior Minister Raymond Marcellin at their head, meant that the ORTF took a more prudent line in future. When the Boulin Plan was published later that year the ORTF was forced to look for an opponent in order to give its coverage credibility. Obligated to ignore MODEF, they decided to kill two birds with one stone. By inviting Jean Doumeng, the ORTF found an opponent and at the same time managed to identify MODEF with the PCF in general and its leading capitalist in particular.(19) By using such a strategy, MODEF were kept off the screens for over a decade. Alfred Nègre's appearance on television was not repeated until June 1981. As one MODEF official put it: "J'avais l'impression de militer dans une organisation clandestine".(20)

This censorship was somewhat mitigated by the creation of FR 3 and its regional stations. In general, agricultural news has been left to the regional news services. Since these programmes are aimed at local audiences with some knowledge of the issues and personalities involved, they are obliged to be more responsive in order to maintain credibility. Therefore with sufficient insistence and perseverance, MODEF leaders

were usually able to appear on regional programmes in those regions where MODEF was most organized. As Mineau put it: "Si j'écris quatre pages d'insultes au directeur, je peux passer à FR 3 Poitou-Charentes".(21)

Once again the situation changed after May 1981. MODEF leaders were approached to appear in news programmes. However, dissatisfaction remained. On the one hand, the leadership criticized Federations who did not make the most of the opportunities available to them. On the other, certain regional stations were criticized by some MODEF leaders. Indeed Emilien Soulié argued at the 1982 Congress that recalcitrant stations should be occupied in protest at the failure to provide balanced coverage. The case of television is instructive for the way in which it exposes a gap between official hostility and boycott at the national level, and the reluctant contacts at the regional and departmental level. Despite the attitudes of successive Ministers and Parisian technocrats, in some departments MODEF is too strong to be permanently ignored. The Direction Departementale de l'Agriculture (DDA) official who argued that "Le MODEF n'est pas reconnu, donc il n'existe pas" was demonstrating an excessive loyalty to his superiors.(22) In fact there was a distinction between the political and technical administrators. Prefecture officials were much more wary of making such provocative statements. In the majority of departments MODEF was received by the prefect at one time or another. Though MODEF Federations had no systematic right of access to the prefect or his assistants, they were usually able to secure a meeting to discuss particular urgent issues, by organizing a small demonstration outside the Prefecture if necessary.(23)

The reason why prefects violated national policy was not due to the

caprices of these representatives of the state but lay in their overriding duty to preserve public order and to secure the re-election of their masters. By agreeing to meetings with MODEF, prefects acted to defuse tensions and to appear to be doing something about the grievances. Secondly, where prefects realized that the supporters of MODEF were not simply the electorate of the PCF, they acted in order to avoid driving these supporters into the arms of the PCF. This would explain why prefects in departments such as the Ile-et-Vilaine, Indre-et-Loire, Cantal and Lot, not noted for rural radicalism, met MODEF leaders.(24)

The presence of MODEF leaders in the political and agricultural life of the department accounted for the necessity of such meetings and also provided the pretext. Rather than violate the letter of national instructions, create an embarrassing precedent and alienate the FNSEA, prefects were able to find ingenious legal fictions to justify meetings with MODEF. For example, the prefect of the Charente pretended to receive M. Raymond Mineau, member of the Chamber of Agriculture, rather than the general secretary of MODEF. Similarly, the prefect of the Vaucluse had no problems in welcoming the mayor-conseiller général of Beaumes-de-Venise and chairman of the Agriculture committee of the Conseil Général.

If there was de facto recognition of MODEF by the political administration, the absence of de jure recognition allowed the technical administration, the Direction Departementale de l'Agriculture (DDA), to more or less ignore MODEF. Not so concerned with public order as much as with orderly decision-making in conjunction with the FDSEA, the Chamber of Agriculture, the CDJA, etc., the DDA had no interest in letting MODEF participate in the decision-making process. Concerned more



with the modernization of agriculture than with preserving electoral majorities, MODEF was merely a troublemaker with nothing to offer from the point of view of the DDA. MODEF was therefore excluded from the various committees in which the FDSEA was represented.

This represented a substantial obstacle to MODEF's effectiveness. As FNSEA officials are fond of pointing out, the way in which a law or Ministerial decree is implemented in each department is often more important than the law or decree itself. It is precisely in these committees from which MODEF was excluded that the method of implementation was decided. This meant that MODEF was always forced to react to decisions after they were taken, rather than take the initiative in proposing what sort of decisions ought to be made. The demonstrations outside prefectures were therefore an admission of weakness rather than signs of strength.

This exclusion was self-perpetuating for precisely the same reasons that MODEF experienced difficulty in dealing with civil servants at the national level. Being outsiders, and believing that under the governments of the Right they would remain on the outside, MODEF naturally concentrated on breaking down the walls rather than opening the door. This involved a rejection of the type of incrementalist bargaining pursued in these committees, which in turn meant the continued exclusion of MODEF as a pre-requisite of their functioning.

That the style of politics as well as the substance of policies was in question has been demonstrated by MODEF's position under a PS government. Even with a government more sympathetic to MODEF's aims, MODEF found it difficult to change its style from one of more or less political agitation to one of industrial negotiation. MODEF discovered

that it had far too few activists trained to master technical dossiers and with expertise in bureaucratic infighting. Up until 1981, the emphasis was, of course, on the skills of agitation and leadership and on the ability to successfully lead one's fellow farmers into protest activities.

The one outstanding example of an institution where MODEF was allowed to participate is the BNIC. Two MODEF officials, the vice-president of the Charente Federation and the president of the Charente-Maritime Federation, were appointed to the BNIC by the government. Members of the BNIC are not nominated by their organization, nor are they considered to be representatives of their organization by the state or their organization. They are chosen for their individual expertise to represent certain categories represented in the BNIC, e.g. farmers, merchants, etc. As one would expect, the MODEF nominations were contested by the FDSEAs concerned but to no avail.(25)

What is the explanation for this breach of the FNSEA monopoly? MODEF itself claimed that its men were appointed simply because of the balance of forces in the Cognac area. Since there was not even a semblance of democratic legitimacy surrounding the BNIC, the only way to secure such legitimacy for its decisions was to make sure that all the farm unions were represented. If the large number of MODEF supporters in the region regarded the decisions of the BNIC as illegitimate and refused to be bound by the discipline imposed by the BNIC, the result would be chaos. Yet the same argument could have been applied in many other cases where the FNSEA monopoly of representation remained intact.

A more plausible explanation is that the presence of MODEF leaders in the BNIC was a kind of Machiavellian experiment with two objectives.

Firstly, by involving MODEF leaders in decision-making either the organization would have to play a more "responsible" role which would force it to police its own supporters or repudiate its members in the BNIC. Secondly, if such a crisis within MODEF were to be created, the possibility of detaching the non-communists from the PCF members of MODEF might occur. In this light, the fact that, of the two MODEF appointees, one was a leader of the Charente MRG Federation and the other was not identified with any political party seems to be more than a coincidence.

Unfortunately for the government, this strategy was not particularly successful. In the first place, the MODEF appointees were the wrong men on whom to base a split since both had a deep ideological and personal commitment to MODEF. In this respect, these two leaders faithfully reflected the nature of the links between MODEF leaders of different political allegiances. Secondly, the organizational structure of MODEF is sufficiently flexible (or put another way, so weak) that a difference of opinion between the representatives and the rest of the organization could be easily blurred. Thirdly, the fact that MODEF had only two seats, and virtually no allies, meant that the MODEF representatives were free to be as "irresponsible" as they wished in most cases, since they could be certain of being outvoted in any case. Finally, in recent years the offensive of certain Cognac merchants such as Remy Martin, and the larger growers of the top quality brand Champagne zone around the canton of Segonzac, against BNIC regulation of the market meant that MODEF's role was limited to a purely defensive one. Most of the efforts of its representatives were devoted to defending the quota system and price levels whilst attempting to ensure that Cognac merchants abide by BNIC decisions - all issues on which MODEF activists were unlikely to quarrel amongst themselves.

Governments have not always been so subtle in dealing with MODEF. Repression is too strong a word to use for two reasons. On the one hand, repression was precluded by the policy of ignoring MODEF - since repression itself involved de facto recognition. On the other hand, MODEF, through ideology and financial necessity, took care to avoid placing themselves in situations where injuries, jailings and fines were likely to result. For example, despite ferocious and offensive criticisms of governments and the FNSEA, L'Exploitant Familial has never been sued for libel.

There was, nevertheless, what one could call administrative harassment. A few examples will suffice to illustrate the petty nature of such harassment. In 1967, when MODEF had finally purchased its national headquarters in Angoulême, one of the first letters which the new owners received was an official order stating that the building was unsafe and unfit for human habitation. In order to avoid demolition, MODEF had to find a relatively large sum (in MODEF terms) of money within a matter of weeks in order to restore the building.(26) Similarly, when the Côtes-du-Nord Federation was formed, the Prefecture refused to accept its registration, claiming that they had to register at the town hall of every commune in which a branch had been set up.(27)

More serious was the use of the judiciary. Two cases are worth attention. The first was a classic of Peyrefettian judicial farce. In 1979, the President of the FNJ of the Charente-Maritime was charged under a Vichyite law with "defacing the countryside". The alleged offence was putting up posters on trees announcing a MODEF fete, a standard practice for many organizations in rural France. The threat degenerated into farce when it was discovered that the "law" had been

repealed before the alleged offence had been committed.(28)

The most serious attack on MODEF came in November 1978 when Raymond Mineau and Jean Leonard, the president of the Charente Federation, were charged with "violation du lieu public et de violence à l'égard du fonctionnaire chargé de service public". The peculiarity of this charge was that it was made two years after the event - a demonstration and occupation of the Angoulême tax office. The energies of MODEF were diverted from the battle raging at the time with the BNIC over production quotas and uprooting of vineyards to the defence of its leaders facing serious criminal charges.(29) According to Raymond Mineau, however, this was not a deliberate political decision to divert MODEF from primary issues but a result of the appointment of a new prefect. New to the department, he was misled by senior civil servants, seeking revenge on MODEF for years of insults and harassment, into under-estimating the strength of MODEF in the department and its ability to mobilize support for its leaders. He was therefore persuaded to instigate the charges against Mineau and Leonard. After several hearings and postponements, matched by demonstrations showing the strength of feeling of MODEF supporters, the Angoulême Two escaped with moderate fines and suspended sentences.(30)

### 3. MODEF'S VIEW OF THE STATE

In Chapter 4 it was explained why MODEF places so much emphasis on the state as the major target of its activity. Here we are concerned with MODEF's attitude to particular parts of the state such as the executive, the legislature and the administration. Although there has been a great deal of debate and analysis on the class nature of the state, there has

been surprisingly little on the class relations of particular parts of the state. Explicit statements have usually been couched in general terms such as Poulantzas' view: "the power concentrated in an institution is class power".(31) The nature of each part of the state depends on the balance of forces between classes. On the other hand, more concrete studies tend to ignore the problem or state it only in implicit terms.

Pisani has given a rare example of an explicit non-Marxist view of the class nature of state apparatuses. He makes clear the link between the problems of agricultural modernization, rationalization of local government and the reform of the administration.(32) Other writers have suggested implicitly the connection between the farm, the structure of the state and local power relations. For example, Medard points to the key role of rural mayors as mediators between citizens and administrators. The political position of the mayors rests on the dependence into which administrative impersonality and complexity throws his constituents.(33) Similarly, Chevallier has shown how the technocratization of the civil service has led to a transfer of power from elected representatives to the representatives of big business.(34)

Two examples specific to agriculture are worthy of attention. The first is the case of the Finistère and the Landerneau co-operative whose existence and internal organization was designed to maintain peasant passivity. Once wider participation was tolerated in the 1950s, the strategy of control broke down.(35) From the perspective of the individual farmer, the non-neutrality of individual components of the state is revealed by the refusal of pied noir capitalist farmers to take up positions in local government offered to them.(36)

In fact there is a great deal of evidence to suggest that agricultural organizations and farmers have been aware precisely of what has been at stake in the various constitutional reforms of the Fifth Republic. Any changes of state structure are likely to change the way in which decisions are made and therefore affect the outcome of decisions. Tavernier has pointed out the CNJA's isolation in approving the early Fifth Republic: "Seul un regime autoritaire pourra briser les résistances, annihiler les réactions des féodalités économiques et promouvoir une organisation rationnelle du monde agricole".(37) For the same reason the CNJA was the only agricultural organization to support the idea of strong regional authorities "capables de battre en brèche les vieilles relations de clientèle départementales".(38) Obviously, "l'attachement profond des élites locales au cadre départemental" shared by the other agricultural organizations was based precisely on the desire to maintain these clientelistic networks.(39) Finally, the hostility towards Pisani's efforts to transform the Ministry of Agriculture from "le Ministère de l'Intérieur des ruraux" into a modernizing force by administrative reform can be explained by the same reasons.(40)

This attachment to traditional forms of the state is prevalent in MODEF. Many MODEF leaders reveal themselves in conversation to suffer from nostalgia for the Parliamentary regime of the Fourth Republic. There are two obvious material reasons underpinning such nostalgia. On the one hand, until 1981 the Fifth Republic was identified with the Right. On the other, the influence of agriculture in the running of the country has been much reduced since 1958. But beyond such direct reasons, there is also the deep distaste of many militants on the Left for the very idea of a Presidential regime. Since one-man rule has been a prerogative of the Right since the days of Napoleon, the extensive

powers of the President offend all their egalitarian and democratic predilections.

Of course, as the new regime established itself and became more and more secure, MODEF was obliged to take account of the fact that the institutions of the Fifth Republic, if not the occupants of its offices, had won widespread acceptance even in the electorate of the Left. They were therefore obliged to come to terms with the domination of executive and administration in the political system. Once the gap between the preferred and the real had been recognized, MODEF was led to adopt an increasingly opportunist strategy, particularly after 1967.

Until 1964, MODEF's strategy was based on direct action such as road blocks and demonstrations outside prefectures. This was seen as the only way in which to influence a government which refused to take into account the demands of MODEF and its supporters. As Alfred Negre put it: "Car dans ce pays privé de Parlement... il ne reste à tous ceux qui souffrent du mépris dans laquelle une oligarchie financière les tient, qu'à se faire respectés par une action directe".(41)

This strategy depended on a sometimes exaggerated emphasis on the uselessness of Parliament under the Fifth Republic. For instance, when, in July 1961, MODEF organized a series of demonstrations outside the prefectures, this was justified in the following terms: "Il ne peut être question maintenant d'orienter les manifestations en direction des députés auxquelles l'actuelle Constitution a enlevé pratiquement tous les pouvoirs".(42) The message was frequently repeated:

Nous n'avons plus d'autre solution efficace que de nous en prendre directement à ceux qui detiennent le pouvoir, car avec le régime



actuel, nous ne pouvons plus envisager de mettre le gouvernement à la raison par l'intermédiaire des parlementaires, ceux-ci étant réduits au rôle de figurants.(43)

Indeed so strong was this feeling that Parliament was merely a rubber stamp that it sometimes seemed that MODEF had no hope of seeing its efforts succeed as long as the Fifth Republic continued in existence. Alfred Nègre was quoted as saying: "Mais le jour où ce développement harmonieux de notre économie se fera dans le respect de tous, soyez bien persuadés, Messieurs, que le soleil ne se levera pas dans ce pays sur un régime présidentiel".(44)

Given this analysis, no opportunity was lost to denounce the presidential characteristics of the Fifth Republic and the extension of the powers of the President. MODEF therefore felt justified in intervening on such political questions as the referendum on the election of the President by universal suffrage. The defence of agriculture and the family farm justified a call to : "réfuser l'aggravation du pouvoir personnel et de lutter pour l'institution d'un régime démocratique où le pouvoir appartiendra aux élus du peuple".(45)

Precisely because this appeal fell on deaf ears, and the proposed reform was adopted by an overwhelming majority, MODEF began to revise its view. A more nuanced attitude to the regime was necessary. The first sign of change dates from July 1962 when MODEF demanded that deputies vote against the Pisani Loi complémentaire - an admission that the deputies had at least the theoretical powers to do so.(46) But nothing much came of this. It was only in November 1964 that MODEF first organized a campaign directed towards Parliament. MODEF mobilized its supporters to pressurize deputies about to decide on a censure motion against the

government. Though the censure failed, the government's normal majority was significantly reduced after deputies faced demonstrations organized by the FNSEA and MODEF. In many cases, deputies had to flee into the arms of the police to seek protection from their irate constituents.(47) The conclusion that MODEF drew from this episode is that, though the regime represented a menace to the family farm, Parliament could be used as a weak link in its armour in order to delay or prevent implementation of legislation considered dangerous.

The main reason for this change of strategy was the Gaullist victory in the 1962 referendum and elections. It became clear that de Gaulle had made the transition from crisis to stable politics without undermining his own position. For MODEF to adopt a strategy of confrontation against this very popular regime would be unproductive. A more long term and more complex strategy had to be elaborated. MODEF itself had to make the transition from crisis to stability.

Closely related was the realization that permanent mobilization of farmers was impossible. Although farmers took longer to lapse into quiescence than any other social group after the Algerian War, the high levels of political mobilization of the 1958-1962 period could not be sustained indefinitely. As the "heroic" period of the Fifth Republic ended and the country settled down into the boredom described in a famous Le Monde article, new forms of action had to be found.(48) The war of manœuvre, involving large-scale militant protests mobilizing thousands of farmers prepared to clash with the CRS, gave way to a war of position.

For once, necessity coincided with opportunity. Once the crisis period was over, it became clear to what extent the Fifth Republic had

revolutionized the political system and to what extent change was superficial. As the darkness cleared, the spectres inspired by Gaullism disappeared. On the one hand, it was by now evident that the apocalyptic accusations of Gaullist dictatorship or fascism were much exaggerated. De Gaulle's denial of dictatorial designs in his investiture speech as last prime minister of the Fourth Republic had been confirmed. Though the Constitution and his own dominance over his supporters gave him the power to act in a highly authoritarian manner, the fact remained that the dominance of the executive depended not only on its political and institutional advantages, but also on the voluntary subordination of the Parliamentary majority. Indeed, if Parliament had less influence on the composition and policies of the government, universal suffrage was more important than ever. Gaullist governments were far more dependent on securing a popular mandate than the average Third or Fourth Republic government.

Deputies therefore still had a legitimate role in the political system. In the provinces, the new deputies of 1958 who wished to retain their seats had to become involved in the local political networks. Indeed given their limited power at the national level, their involvement in local politics became even more important.(49) At the same time, the increased strength of the Left in Parliament after 1962, and, even more so, after 1967, gave MODEF greater possibilities of securing a hearing. Not only did more socialist and PCF deputies imply a more receptive audience for MODEF but right-wing deputies also had to take more notice of their constituents. This appreciation of the situation was made quite explicit by MODEF. Mineau wrote: "dans les batailles importantes il est maint député inconditionnel ou rallié, qui pensera avec angoisse à ses frères d'armes victimes de l'hécatombe du 12 mars 1967 et qui aura tendance à 'se planquer'".(50) Therefore there was reason "pour estimer

que les travaux de la nouvelle Assemblée auront plus d'importance que ceux de la précédente et que notre action pourra y obtenir des échos favorables".(51)

This showed clearly the links between MODEF's strategy as a pressure group and the underlying political motivations of its leaders. On the one hand, Parliament was identified as the weak point through which the government quarantine of MODEF could be circumvented. Individual deputies were more vulnerable than the government as a whole. But it was precisely the presence of the Left in Parliament which made it an attractive target. Through meetings with Parliamentary groups of all shades, some legitimacy would be given to MODEF. But to the extent that MODEF created its own legitimacy in the countryside, this would rub off on deputies seen to be favourable to MODEF, i.e. those of the PCF and the FGDS. The parties of the Left stood to gain more from this mutual recognition.

Since 1967, MODEF's strategy has been based on the return to a political system founded on the Trinity of minister, prefect and deputy. Obviously, the balance of power and the nature of the relationship between each part of the state has changed, but MODEF has not analyzed exactly what the changes have been. Its strategy has been essentially opportunist.

Frederic Lindenstaedt described the position of MODEF towards Parliament in the following terms:

C'est vrai que les députés ont peu de pouvoir. Mais cela ne doit pas nous empêcher d'avoir une activité en leur direction. Mais ce qu'on veut surtout dire, c'est qu'il ne faut pas en attendre des

miracles... Il ne faut pas se faire des illusions mais il faut profiter de cette possibilité qui existe d'influencer sur et de discuter avec les parlementaires.(52)

Nevertheless, despite such lack of confidence in the capacity of Parliament to bring about any changes, MODEF has often posed as the defender and admirer of Parliament. In April 1967, MODEF called on deputies to stand up for their rights and refuse to grant the Pompidou government emergency powers to legislate by decree.(53) Similarly, it opposed the plan to reform the Senate in 1969 and to reduce the influence of elected representatives in the political system.(54)

Such a policy was dictated by political tactics rather than by principles. Such appeals were designed primarily to embarrass the deputies of the right. Raymond Mineau revealed the real motives in 1972 when he suggested that deputies were hiding behind the constitutional restraints on their powers to support the government, whilst pretending to their constituents that they opposed the most objectionable aspects of agricultural policy. For this reason, deputies had to be encouraged or pressurized to use their limited powers to the full or face the electoral consequences:

Si ce refus de réduire la TVA est maintenu par le Sénat et si alors la majorité des députés ne change pas d'attitude, nous n'aurons... d'autre moyen d'obtenir l'augmentation des prix agricoles qui nous est indispensable que le balayage impitoyable, lors des prochaines élections législatives, de la majorité des députés qui ont pris cette responsabilité...(56)

Rather than formulate a theory of where and how to apply pressure to the

state in order to win concessions, MODEF concentrated on mobilizing its members to educate them politically by example. Given its pessimistic evaluation of the possibility of influencing the policies of right-wing governments, it was more important to make farmers recognize the intransigence of the Right. But at the same time, the requirements of MODEF as an organization meant that it had to have some recognizable achievements to its credit in order to maintain its audience. Faced with these almost contradictory pressures, MODEF depended on ad hoc improvisation. It simply appealed to or protested against the institution or individual office holder seen as responsible for or capable of resolving a particular problem. Any opportunity was seized to mobilize its members against deputies, ministers and prefects.

Parliament provided the easiest target for protest at a national level since it had to submit itself for re-election at regular intervals. Indeed this importance of Parliament to MODEF as a target of protest and intermediary between MODEF and the executive helps to explain one of the major differences in strategy between MODEF and the CGT. Whereas the CGT (at least after 1968) took the view that excessive class struggling is bad for the prospects of the Left and did its best to establish pre-electoral truces in industrial relations, MODEF pursued the contrary policy. Since the CGT had permanent dealings with the government and administration, and had a direct opponent in the employers, the organization could afford to withdraw into the background temporarily without too much difficulty. But for MODEF, elections provided a rare opportunity to mobilize its members and to pressurize deputies. In July 1972, faced with the threat of early elections, Mineau argued that:

Nous n'avons pas à être retenus par de telles considérations...

Nous poursuivrons l'action entreprise sans aménagement aucun, nous

lancerons toutes actions qui s'avèront alors nécessaires...  
Pourquoi limiter notre décision à ce seul cas et ne pas généraliser  
à toutes les elections lorsque les intérêts importants des  
exploitants familiaux sont en jeu...(56)

After coming to this conclusion, MODEF considered elections to be a good time for pressurizing parties and deputies, since the outgoing government would be prepared to indulge in some bribery and make extravagant promises which could be used to discredit them at a future date.(57)

In effect, Parliament was the only national political focus for MODEF until 1981. MODEF's dealings with deputies and senators were on two levels. MODEF officials had more or less regular meetings with the leaders of all parliamentary groups. It was nevertheless evident that contacts with the groups of the Left, and of the PCF in particular, were more systematic and more useful in relaying MODEF concerns into Parliamentary debates. The contacts with the right-wing groups benefitted MODEF only in terms of securing greater legitimacy. Such meetings involved a de facto recognition by the Right that MODEF was a legitimate professional body rather than a PCF-dominated political association. Similarly, MODEF was sometimes invited to present evidence to Parliamentary committees, as in July 1970, when Mineau argued against a proposed bill designed to attract urban capital into agriculture.(58)

The other type of contact between Parliament and MODEF was less formal - the mass demonstration outside the Palais Bourbon. Given the sacrifices of time, money and energy which such national demonstrations entail, they were few and far between, usually timed to coincide with Parliamentary debates of major importance to farmers, such as the

discussion on the entry of Greece into the EEC.

Apart from one meeting with Pisani in 1965, contact between MODEF and national government and administration was almost non-existent until 1981. Despite frequent efforts to break the boycott by attempts made to meet successive Ministers of Agriculture, MODEF complained bitterly that they were never received except by the concierge. Contacts remained unofficial, or indeed bordered on illegality. For example, in 1978, Raymond Barre visited the Vaucluse. His visit was interrupted when he was surrounded by a group of MODEF activists and forced to discuss the problems of agriculture in the Vaucluse and Bouches-du-Rhône for over an hour before being liberated.(59) Similarly in January 1981, Pierre Mehaignerie, mayor of Vitré in the Ile-et-Vilaine as well as Minister of Agriculture, was unpleasantly surprised when his office was invaded one Saturday morning by a group of MODEF leaders and officials.(60) The most spectacular of these occasions occurred in 1977 when over 200 MODEF members invaded the Ministry of Agriculture itself.(61) But despite the importance which the question of official recognition held in the eyes of MODEF and the efforts which it made to achieve this goal, its commando-style tactics had little effect on the state, or on the determination of governments not to recognize MODEF. Such actions, however, had a much greater resonance within MODEF since they contributed substantially to raising the morale of the activists and supporters.

In the departments, the position was reversed. The executive, rather than the deputies, was the normal target of MODEF activity. It is one thing to organize a demonstration outside the Palais Bourbon, another to demonstrate against individual deputies. To protest against a decision of Parliament means a diffuse attribution of responsibility for a



particular problem. It is not necessary to make explicit precisely against which deputy or group of deputies one is protesting. Due to the paradox that, where the individual deputy is most influential (i.e. in the department) he has no official status in the local political system, the deputy does not provide an institutional focus for protest. This means it is impossible to separate an attack on the deputy from an attack on his person and party. To avoid explicit partisan identification, MODEF had to approach deputies in an indirect manner. On the one hand, since relations with the deputies of the Left were usually fairly good, MODEF had little need or desire to pressurize them. But with the deputies of the Right, MODEF had a much more difficult relationship. The usual tactic was to appeal to them, without illusions, to use their influence to protect the interests of their farming constituents. By failing to do so, they exposed the reality of their collaboration with the government and discredited themselves in the eyes of farmers. MODEF was simply able to sit back and let the deputies of the Right spread MODEF "propaganda by deed".

The consequence of this political inhibition was that MODEF pressure was generally directed towards the prefect. As the representative of the government, the prefect provided a natural target for those wishing to protest against the policies of the government. The Prefecture as the physical manifestation of state power in the department was the natural place to protest. Finally, the fact that the prefect was as much of a politician as an administrator made him the perfect foil for a pressure group, such as MODEF, which emphasized its disagreement with the general political direction of government policy rather than with specific decisions.

In fact, MODEF's attitude to the different institutions of the state was

the mirror image of those institutions' attitude to MODEF. Just as the technical administration boycotted MODEF rigorously, MODEF ignored it, except for special cases when the local tax administration became a source of discontent.(62) As we have seen, the Prefecture had more contact with the MODEF Federation than did the DDA. Similarly, MODEF's stress on political change led the state to regard MODEF as a political association rather than as a professional organization. This accounts for the fact that the official in each department most informed about the activities and policies of the MODEF Federation was not the head of the DDA, but the local chief of the Renseignements Generaux.(63)

The perception of the state held by MODEF and the perception of MODEF amongst officialdom proved not only mutually reinforcing but also self-perpetuating. As MODEF was denied recognition as well as representation in the network of official committees, MODEF was left with little choice but to direct its efforts towards the political head of the local administration rather than towards his technical subordinates. Equally, MODEF's view of the state meant that it made more sense to go directly to the prefect whilst, at the same time, the political nature of its discourse prevented technical administrators from dealing with it.

As has been seen in earlier chapters, MODEF activists play an important role in the agricultural organizations and in political life. Yet MODEF failed to capitalize on this implantation to invest the network of official committees. It is clear that if more of its activists participated in these committees as representatives of other organizations, MODEF itself would have had much greater influence than that entailed by the occasional meeting with the Prefect. The FNSEA barricades could not have remained so firm if MODEF had made a serious

effort to undermine them. This failure can largely be explained by MODEF's view of the Fifth Republican state and its agricultural policy.

Since agricultural policy under the Fifth Republic was so inimical to the interests of the family farm, it was necessary to reverse and transform rather than modify these policies. Given the fact that the state was in the hands of autocratic technocrats who had sold their souls to monopoly capital, changes introduced by pressure exerted on the state and para-statal apparatuses could only be minor modifications. The greater influence on decision-making one could expect from a strategy designed to win such positions could not compensate for the discredit which participation would create in the eyes of many of its supporters. MODEF's apocalyptic view of agricultural policy led it to over-estimate the strength of the executive and administration, and to under-estimate the resistance and resilience of farmers faced with policies designed to push them out of the industry. In consequence, the only way in which significant concession could be won was through protest and direct action. Or, as it was put in 1969: "L'action est autrement plus efficace que les démarches".(64)

The reader will have noticed that the creation of a new level of government and administration, the region, has not been mentioned until now. This gap, or delay, is a direct reflection of MODEF's attitude to the region. At the same time, MODEF's view on the region is indicative of its views of how the state ought to be organized. In the chapter on MODEF's internal organization, its failure to even begin organizing at the regional level until the late 1970s has been described. This was due not only to the material difficulties which the creation of regional structures would have involved, but also because of hostility towards and suspicion of the region itself.

Basically, the regionalization decrees of 1964 and 1972 were unacceptable to MODEF because they represented a transfer of power from elected politicians to the administration. As Grémion and Worms soon pointed out: "l'action régionale reste essentiellement du ressort du seul appareil administratif".(65) However, the consultative procedures established by the regions gave greater influence to the modernizing economic elites, which helps to explain the devotion of the CNJA to the regional reforms and the readiness of the FNSEA to secure the advantages of participation.(66) On the other hand, this inspired the resistance of departmental political elites, of which many MODEF leaders formed part, whose positions were undermined. In the words of Grémion and Worms: "C'est dans le cadre départementale que la majorité des élites locales peuvent avoir accès à l'Etat, donc du même coup faire preuve d'efficacité auprès de leur mandants..."(67) A similar concern underlay the hostility of the opposition parties to the 1964 reforms which they saw as a way of circumventing their power in the elected state apparatuses.(68)

MODEF's grievances against the regions were made explicit during the 1969 referendum campaign. Apart from MODEF's own exclusion from the new institutions, its criticisms of the proposed regional and Senate reforms confirm the above analysis. The proposals were criticized because of the greater prominence which they would give to the representatives of industry and for disturbing the rural-urban imbalance in the Senate. This obviously implied that giving greater power to industry and the modernizers would be detrimental to agriculture and the interests of the majority of farmers. Even more revealing was the condemnation of the fact that representatives of economic organizations would be associated with political decision-making. The implication was that MODEF felt

happier keeping such decisions in the hands of elected politicians who would be more susceptible to popular pressure and democratic control.(69)

Once, again, MODEF failed to make the most of the possibilities created by the existence of the region. The fact that the region was a level of government insulated from popular pressure was something of a self-fulfilling prediction. To ignore the region was to allow the region to ignore its citizens. Tarrow has identified three types of regionalism. The first is a set of policies for regional development whilst the second is an ideology justifying the right and need for the central government to intervene and implement such policies. The third is described as "an organizing framework for peripheral defence".(70) Obviously for MODEF the first and second types of regionalism were unacceptable. Since regional policy, in the eyes of MODEF, was designed to eliminate more and more farmers, it had to be resisted, and, by extension, any ideology justifying such policies had to be challenged. But MODEF threw out the wheat with the chaff. Regionalism as an ideology of defensive mobilization against central government, or the region as a focus for protest, never entered into MODEF's calculations - a neglect all the more surprising when one realizes how easily regional institutions inspired by central government have been hi-jacked for this purpose.(71)

The root cause of this failure has been implicit in this chapter - MODEF's deep distaste for bureaucratic politics, and its emphasis on the republican tradition of democratic politics. This provides a major stumbling block for those who would like to equate MODEF with Poujadism. Stanley Hoffmann described Poujadism as "une nostalgie d'un âge d'or où les petits Poujades cultivaient leur jardins dans leur petit village, sans aucun contact avec l'Etat".(72) But in the case of MODEF, one

finds not a hostility towards the state as such, but towards particular parts of the state and their presumed links with the enemies of MODEF, such as big business or the FNSEA. Similarly, where the Poujadists demonstrated a hostility towards deputies as a class which led them to present their own candidates under the slogan -"Sortez les sortants", MODEF has only criticized deputies for supporting policies considered detrimental to agriculture. MODEF never regarded deputies as inevitably corrupt. The most striking contradiction between Poujadist and MODEF views of the state is the gap between the Poujadist programme and the views of MODEF described in this chapter. Whereas Poujade proposed the transfer of powers over economic policy-making to the Chambers of Commerce, Chambers of Agriculture, etc., MODEF has resisted all such efforts. Poujade proposed a quasi-Presidential regime. MODEF was bitterly hostile to the granting of effective powers to the President and the loss of Parliamentary sovereignty.(73) In fact MODEF lives in a much more sophisticated mental universe, analyzing politics and the state in terms of class, than did the Poujadists with their moralizing discourse based on the concept of the shop-keeper as "l'épine dorsale de la nation".(74)

#### 4. MODEF AND THE P.S. STATE 1981 - 1982

The victory of Francois Mitterrand and the appointment of Edith Cresson as Minister of Agriculture was quickly followed by official recognition for MODEF. In early June 1981, MODEF was officially received by a Minister of Agriculture for the first time since 1965. Due to the stance of MODEF, and particularly of its general secretary, in the months leading up to the Presidential election, there was some doubt whether this recognition would be obtained so readily. But due to some

energetic lobbying by the socialist leaders of MODEF, MODEF's less than wholehearted support for Mitterrand's candidature was overlooked and MODEF emerged from quarantine.

The new government had two incentives to accord MODEF official status. On the one hand, it was the only agricultural organization to openly support Mitterrand, even if it had waited until after the first ballot. Furthermore, even if the PCF and its members in MODEF were suspicious of the new government they had no choice but to support the PS government. This meant that the PS had at least a short term interest in strengthening the hand of MODEF by granting it representative status. The second reason was the concern of the government to undermine the FNSEA's monopoly. One way in which this was done was by restricting the contacts between the administration and the FNSEA.(75) MODEF provided another possibility. By legitimizing MODEF, the government could expect either to wean away farmers from the FNSEA, or make its right-wing leadership more amenable to a greater socialist presence in the national leadership. Recognizing MODEF, along with the FFA and Paysan Travailleur, was perhaps a means of intimidation by preparing a possible "stratégie de réchange".

However, after a year of PS-PCF government, this recognition remained partial. If MODEF had meetings with Edith Cresson and her advisors, it had not received the Presidential seal of approval in an official audience at the Elysée. Similarly, though it had been invited to the Annual Agricultural Conference, it had yet to enjoy the close relationship and permanent participation from which the FNSEA benefitted under the governments of the Right. This position was reflected in the departments. Though MODEF enjoyed fairly free access to the Prefects, its contacts with the technicians of the administration remained limited.

The problem which MODEF's new position under a left-wing government raised were discussed at the 1982 Congress in Montrueil. In R. Gondran's report, much emphasis was placed on the need to gain full recognition. Since the administration would not go out of its way to encourage MODEF to participate, recognition had to be established in each department. In a parody of Christian Bonnet, he pointed out that:

La reconnaissance ne se décrète pas, elle se gagne. Elle doit se gagner à tous les niveaux, il est indispensable que sur le plan régional, départemental, local, là aussi on fasse le maximum. Il faut se battre.(76)

Much of the report was devoted to an analysis of the attitude MODEF should take towards the government. The new situation obviously meant difficulties in adapting to a new, more co-operative, relationship with government. The fact that many activists had spent many years in a purely oppositional role, but now shared responsibility for bringing the new government to power, meant that loyalties were likely to be divided. Gondran identified three positions within the organization on the relationship between MODEF and the new government, all of which he rejected as mistaken. These potential strategies were as follows:

Doit-on combattre le gouvernement du changement comme on combattait n'importe quel gouvernement chiraquien ou giscardien? Ou doit-on ménager le gouvernement actuel parce que nous avons contribué à le mettre en place? Ou encore, doit-on, de crainte de se tromper, adopter une attitude d'attente de l'arme au pied.(77)

The solution at which the leadership arrived was only partially



convincing. Recognizing that MODEF's role had to change with the changed situation, it argued that MODEF must not remain an organization mainly concerned with protesting against the government and putting forward policies which had little chance of acceptance. Under a government of the Left, MODEF had to play a more constructive role since it could seriously expect some of its proposals to be put into practice. The new MODEF would be a "un syndicat d'action de lutte pour la défense de nos revendications", but, at the same time, "nous voulons nous considérer comme une force de proposition auprès de la nouvelle majorité".(78)

Not only did MODEF categorically reject the idea that it should be "une courroie de transmission" for the government, but it also emphasized the need to continue in its role as "un syndicat de lutte".(79) But since the government is so heavily involved in the agricultural economy, both through its own policies and the CAP, the problem arose of how to continue such actions without coming into conflict with the government. This issue was avoided through a deft sidestep by arguing that the activities of MODEF were not designed to put pressure on the government, but to assist it to overcome entrenched capitalist resistance to change. The action of the Hérault Federation in occupying a freighter in the port of Sète in July 1981 and destroying its cargo of wine became the classic justification for such a strategy.(80) This display of anger gave the government the pretext to impose stricter import controls on Italian wines, a decision which even MODEF admitted was on the verge of European legality.(81) Whether Pierre Mauroy and Edith Cresson were quite so grateful for this unofficial assistance was doubtful.

Two main considerations determined this strategy. Firstly, the influence of PCF members in MODEF can be detected. Suspicions about the

willingness of the PS to act effectively to implement their policies meant that pressure had to be kept up on the government. More subtly, such a strategy permitted MODEF to combine the benefits gained from its links with the new government with the rewards to be gained from the leadership of popular protest. On this basis, even the socialists in MODEF could be induced to maintain a militant stance.

The other very pressing factor in the rejection of the transmission belt strategy was the new-found militancy of the FNSEA. Since the victory of Francois Mitterrand disrupted the government-FNSEA alliance, the FNSEA was free to abandon its policing role. Given the problems which many farmers faced, the FNSEA had no difficulty in directing discontent against the new government. Graphic examples include the rough treatment of Edith Cresson at the hands of Norman farmers and the thousands of farmers who congregated in Paris in February 1982. It was impossible for MODEF to permit the FNSEA to mobilize opposition without competition. Not only would MODEF suffer in the permanent competition for members and votes but the pressure exerted by the FNSEA on a hesitant government could secure the re-establishment of the FNSEA monopoly of representation. In this competition, MODEF could make itself of value to the government by directing protests away from it towards other targets, such as importers or the EEC. It was not an accident that the first serious demonstration which MODEF launched against the European Commission and Council of Ministers took place in Brussels in early 1982.(82)

Though official recognition was an undoubted benefit for MODEF, particularly in raising the moral of its activists, the existence of a left-wing government dominated by the PS presented MODEF mainly with problems of adaptation. Most of the difficulties were not insuperable

political or intellectual divisions. Rather they were questions which could only be resolved in practice. The major danger would be that if and when the PCF leaves, or is excluded from, government, the bitterness amongst the activists of the Left could be such that MODEF would be strained to breaking point by divided loyalties. It would be ironic if the downfall of MODEF was brought about by the consequences of an electoral victory which it had done so much in the countryside to facilitate.

The final difficulty is over the substance of PS policy. In the first year criticism concentrated on the pace rather than the direction of change. Disagreements over details made itself evident but only two potential sources of serious friction arose. The Product Boards set up by the government provided a potential source of uncertainty since MODEF was unsure that the Boards would be effective and competent (given the state of many product markets it would be extremely difficult to make things worse) and that the composition of the Boards would be acceptable. MODEF was, of course, determined that it should be represented and that the Boards should not fall into the tender care of the FNSEA. But since no principles were involved, agreement seemed possible.

The other major policy problem was the question of the extension of the Common Market to Spain and Portugal. For MODEF this is the issue which overrides all others. Since it thinks that its support depends on its uncompromising hostility to the extension of the geographical and political limits of the EEC, it would have no choice but to enter into open confrontation if the government were to submit to pressure from industry, pro-EEC elements, and its European partners to open the door to Spain. But, for MODEF, a split with its government on this issue

would be preferable to the results of a breakdown of the PS-PCF alliance since the entire organization would enter into opposition. Indeed the sense of betrayal felt by the socialists in MODEF would probably propel them to the forefront of the opposition.

##### 5. MODEF AND THE DEBATE ON CORPORATISM

MODEF's relationship with the state has implications for theories of pressure group politics in general, and the theories of corporatism which have become popular in recent years. The evidence presented in this chapter and in Chapter 6 obviously shows pluralist theories of pressure groups to be inapplicable. Phillippe Schmitter defines corporatism as:

a system of interest representation in which the constituent units are organized into a limited number of singular, compulsory, non-competitive, hierarchically ordered and functionally differentiated categories, recognized or licensed (if not created) by the state and granted a deliberate representational monopoly within their respective categories in exchange for observing certain controls on their selection of leaders and articulation of demands and supports.(83)

This system of pressure group politics has been variously described as a strategy designed to control the potentially destructive elements of the population in which "trade-unions become the agencies of social control...", or simply as an efficient way of organizing the political decision-making process.(84)

Lehmbruch has identified France as one of the western European countries in which corporatist institutions have been least prevalent.(85) But at the same time, as Schmitter has pointed out, agriculture is one of the sectors of policy-making most favourable to the emergence of corporatist structures. As we have seen, France is no exception.(86) However, the French case is complicated by the existence of MODEF. Around twenty-five per cent of the agricultural population has consistently refused to endorse the FNSEA-government link, a percentage which limited the extent to which the FNSEA was able to co-operate with the state. MODEF therefore provides an example of how corporatism has been limited in agriculture and allows certain insights to be gained into why such practices have been absent in other spheres of policy-making.

Three factors have inhibited popular support for corporatist practices and institutions. Firstly, there is the problem of class consciousness, the nature of which is reflected by MODEF's ideology. France is often taken to be a case of a country whose Left is strongly class-conscious. This impression has been reinforced by the contempt with which the French Left regard ideas such as the British Social Contract, and the hostility of the PCF to Italian initiatives such as the "historic compromise".

A close examination reveals that MODEF, along with most other pressure groups associated with the Left, does not make a sufficient distinction between short and long-term interests to permit it to sacrifice short-term interests for long-term goals. This would suggest that the Left in France is not an acutely class conscious alliance of white collar workers, manual workers, farmers, etc., but a Federation of group interests. There is a teacher consciousness, a civil service

consciousness, an engineering worker consciousness, etc. Whilst each group is primarily concerned with its own interest, each has sufficient political awareness to realize that its interests are best protected if other interests are pushing in the same direction. It is a marriage of convenience rather than of love. United by a mutual enemy rather than mutual attraction, the lowest common denominator of this alliance is the idea that the bosses and the state are to blame.

This type of category consciousness helps to explain the block placed on corporatist organization by the consequences of collaboration between leaders and the state. This is a process which has been well documented. Crouch argues that "the central problem of corporatist organization is the arbitrariness and partiality of its representation and the unresponsiveness to popular control of its elites".(87) This means that such pressure groups have great difficulty imposing agreements on their members. Since the qualities required of the leadership are no longer those necessary to protect the interests of their members but rather to impose discipline on them, "the legitimization and union action which the state needs de-legitimizes the union leadership in the eyes of the base".(88) Panitch explains the instability of corporatist relationships by the fact that pressure groups are indeed obliged to be responsive to their members.(89) Indeed the rise of MODEF is a classic illustration of this problem, its growth reflecting the development of the close relationship between the FNSEA and the state. Bagès' studies of the Gers also points to the same conclusion, where "l'apathie ou se réfugie la masse paysanne dans les périodes calmes ne traduit-elle pas le refus d'une politique syndicale de "concertation" permanente..."(90)

The final inhibition relates to these two. Just as corporatist

institutions are unstable, so is a strategy of permanent militancy. Most mobilizations tend to subside as suddenly as they arise and so organizations based on a militant strategy remain activist rather than mass organizations. This reduces their ability to speak for, and bargain on behalf of, people they claim to represent. Correctly rejecting the explanation that corporatist practices are limited in France because of the ideological intransigence of pressure groups, Lehmbruch uses this weakness of pressure groups as his own explanation.(91) This is certainly true but if one stops here, as Lehmbruch does, one becomes the academic equivalent of the judge who blames the rapist's victim.

As we have seen, MODEF's lack of participation in decision-making has been the result as much of official intransigence and administrative hostility as of MODEF recalcitrance. Not only has MODEF constantly tried to gain official recognition but it has always treated the state as its most important interlocutor. Since the advent of a socialist government, its favourable attitude to negotiation and participation in decision-making, including the High Mass of agricultural corporatism - the Annual Agricultural Conference - has been clearly demonstrated.

The role of the state in rejecting corporatist strategies of accommodation reveals the fallacy in the argument of those who argue that such strategies are designed to de-politicize the members of the groups involved.(92) Since corporatist arrangements operate on the basis of incremental bargaining, it is assumed that they are designed to limit class conflict and consciousness. However, such a view is almost a mirror image of the liberal view of politics as negotiation and compromise.(93) Only overt class conflict is regarded as political. By such a restrictive definition, one is able to fulminate against other

types of politics in normative terms dressed up in scientific clothing.

What is really at stake in corporatist strategies is not the attempt at de-politicization, but rather the creation of a specific type of politics and class consciousness. As we have seen, narrow group consciousness inhibits corporatist practices as does a revolutionary socialist class consciousness. What is needed is social democratic class consciousness. An awareness of class interests beyond the group, and the acceptance of the necessity to sacrifice group interests to promote the interests of the class, has to be coupled with the belief that such interests can be defended by co-operating with other classes. Such a social democratic consensus has been absent in France.

The state and its officials have been as hostile to such a consensus as the irate citizens who are usually blamed. Schmitter has pointed out the link between the way in which the capitalist system is reproduced in a particular country and the way in which interests are represented and accommodated.(93) In post-war France, a curious synthesis has emerged - social technocracy. The economic and social policies characteristic of social democracy have been pursued whilst the political aspects of social democracy have been rejected. One of the main functions of the state in the reproduction of capitalism is sustaining the legitimacy of the socio-economic system over which it presides. During the formative years of the Fifth Republic, responsibility for the creation and maintenance of legitimacy was divided between the state apparatus and the Head of State. The apparatus concentrated on economic development, both in direct accumulation through nationalized industries and state intervention to help private sector accumulation. Popular consent was gained by an American-style high wages-vs-good behaviour strategy, a strategy supplemented by the indigenous tradition of the "patron de



choc". But general political legitimacy was delegated to one man, de Gaulle.

This interpretation is sustained by two very interesting examples. The first is the coincidence between the departure of de Gaulle and the closest thing to corporatism the Fifth Republic has seen - the "Nouvelle Société" of Chaban-Delmas. No longer could the regime depend on the direct appeal to the nation of a charismatic leader. A more institutionalized approach seemed necessary, one which took into account the importance of intermediaries. Secondly, the fact that agriculture is the field in which corporatist-style politics have been pursued most systematically is revealing. Given the need to conciliate farmers because of their electoral importance, and being incapable of guaranteeing high agricultural incomes, the state was left with little alternative but to try to control farmers through the medium of the FNSEA.

The emphasis on the role of the state apparatus in legitimation through economic success explains the reluctance to allow groups such as MODEF to participate in decision-making. The description of the state's attitude towards MODEF in the early part of this chapter is reminiscent of Offe's "purposive-rational" state governed by a St. Simonian technocracy. Problems, particularly economic ones, can best be resolved by leaving them to experts. Organizations like MODEF are guilty on two counts - lack of expertise and determination to politicize problems which are basically administrative or technical.(95) This also helps to explain the technocratic nature of French planning.(96)

Ironically, the technocrats have often done their best to inadvertently promote exactly the kind of politics they affect to despise. The

official discrimination against MODEF and other dissidents within agricultural organizations ensured that the corporatist alliance with the FNSEA would be restricted. Excluding MODEF on the basis of the political orientation of its leaders, rather than on the policies which it put forward, created two limitations on the co-operation of the FNSEA. In the first place, the exclusion of MODEF on partisan and ideological grounds implied that there was a partisan and ideological similarity between the government and the FNSEA. This meant that conflict in agriculture would be on ideological and party lines rather than by product or region, divisions which could have been reconciled with greater ease. Secondly, the exclusion of MODEF gave it complete freedom of action to denounce any FNSEA-government compromise, to capitalize on the discontent aroused by such compromises, and aggregate the grievances without too much concern for consistency or cost.

Finally, there is the question of the state's response to the weakness of pressure groups. Though this is an obvious area of interest, hardly anyone has bothered to discuss it. The fact that the state takes advantage of such weakness to ignore interests which may be inconvenient for the state has only been mentioned explicitly in a recent article by Panitch and is implicit in Schmitter's discussion of capitalist resistance to corporatist institutions.(97) The cat and mouse treatment which MODEF has received at the hands of the state is a classic example of this simple, but apparently inconvenient, virtually "iron" law of politics.

CONCLUSION      THE IMPACT OF MODEF

When MODEF's founders gathered together in Toulouse in 1959, they viewed the future of French agriculture with some trepidation. The family farm, they believed, was doomed to disappear shortly unless the direction of agricultural policy was changed. MODEF's success, or lack of it, in this respect is the final question which must be considered.

In a sense, MODEF's continued existence at the end of the period under consideration represented both a victory and a defeat. For the pessimist, the fact that MODEF still existed after twenty-three years was indicative of the success of the alliance between the state and the FNSEA. Despite the dangers of this alliance for the non-capitalist sector, the leadership which presided over the contraction of the industry remained in place, with the continued support of the mass of its victims. For the optimist, MODEF's continued existence showed the resilience of the family farm. Though one million farms disappeared during the first twenty years of the Fifth Republic, enough remained to ensure that a significant non-capitalist sector continued to be a constraint on agricultural policy-making. The process of elimination had been much slower than had been predicted in the 1960s. The continued existence of the family farm demonstrated both the impact of MODEF on agricultural policy and provided the social basis for MODEF itself.

One interesting indication of the success which MODEF had is to be found in the linguistics of agriculture. Despite the modernizing discourse of the FNSEA, and the attempt to popularize the concept of the farmer as a "chef d'entreprise", more traditional terms such as "l'exploitant", "le

cultivateur" and even "le paysan" were still in more frequent usage than terms with capitalist connotations. Despite the constant flow of premature obituaries, the family farm, however much modernized, still lives on.

When challenged about the success of their efforts, MODEF leaders and activists made a common response. Recognizing their limitations, and faced with the obvious fact that Fifth Republican agricultural policy, under the successive governments of the Right, continued on its inexorable course, the most frequent reply was that: "Le MODEF a empêché beaucoup de choses de se faire". MODEF, therefore, fought a rearguard action, concentrating, as its name suggests, on defence. For MODEF, success was defined in purely negative terms, since the prevention of the liquidation of the family farm was its prime objective. That this was a restrictive factor on the ability of MODEF to take the initiative was not often perceived. The demoralizing consequences of defensiveness were limited by the fact that even such negative victories were substantial achievements in their own right.

In this defence, MODEF adopted two complementary strategies; one based on resolution of the collective grievances of the profession; the second based on overcoming individual difficulties. In the first place, MODEF, as an organization, concentrated on a global and highly politicized critique of agricultural policy. By constant agitation and protest, it was hoped that governments would be induced to come to terms with the continued existence of the family farm. At the same time MODEF attempted to galvanize the FNSEA into leading the resistance to the state. By competing for support with the FNSEA, MODEF sought to limit the collaborationist tendencies of the FNSEA, by setting limits beyond which this collaboration could not go.

MODEF activists often claimed that even if the organization was not recognized, it was heard. By providing a focus for opposition and an alternative leadership, MODEF obliged the government and the FNSEA to implement their policies more cautiously than would otherwise have been the case. As a result, if MODEF had little influence over the contents and objectives of agricultural policy, it exerted an influence on its timing. From the point of view of the individual farmer, this could sometimes amount to the the same thing, as timing of policy changes could affect the financial stability of the farm.

Paradoxically, MODEF was more successful with the second strategy. Despite its official emphasis on collective action against the state, MODEF, as a group of individual activists, concentrated on resolving individual difficulties. Despite its official reluctance to engage in such clientelistic practices, it was unable not to do so, if it was to achieve any substantial degree of support. The traditional role of agricultural unionism as a dispenser of services was simply too strong to be ignored.

Ironically, not only was the social work function of the organization vital as a means of attracting support, it also did more to defend the family farm than the more abstract politicized campaigns. Certain MODEF activists perceived this, but it was a view which was rarely openly admitted. The cumulative effect of negotiating solutions for individual, or small groups of, farmers (e.g. negotiations over weather damage compensation, dealing with tax problems, etc.) effectively counteracted the impact of agricultural policy. But, from the MODEF viewpoint, the difficulty was that such a strategy boiled down to putting a human face on the government's policy.

Such a situation points to the responsibility of MODEF's ideology for some of the organization's practical limitations. The defensive strategy, for instance, was deeply rooted in MODEF's contrast between the idealized past and the all too difficult present. Concentrating on the former at the expense of the latter, MODEF was led to oppose rather than propose the future. That the opportunities to put forward alternative policies were there was demonstrated by the case of the SAFERs. As the reactionary hostility to the SAFERs manifested by MODEF in the 1960s gave way to the progressive reformism of the 1970s, MODEF began to have a more significant impact on policy, securing support for its proposal from the parties of the Left and even obliging the Giscardian regime to make reforms.

Similarly, the egalitarian emphasis and the activist philosophy gave rise to a half-hearted clientelism. De facto recognition of clientelism was combined with de jure hostility, ensuring that such clientelism remained on an individual basis rather than on an organizational scale. Not only did this present MODEF with the problem of electoral support, it also allowed the FNSEA a free hand in its single-minded pursuit of the objective of bringing the entire farming population and the agri-complex under its control.

There is, of course, another less explicit role played by MODEF. Though not part of its formal programme, the ideological and political connections of its leadership and many of its activists meant that MODEF was an expression of the Left in agriculture. These ties, plus the fact that MODEF never concealed its belief that political change was necessary to safeguard the future of the family farm, meant that it served an important role in furthering the fortunes of the Left in the countryside.

In many respects, MODEF conformed to the pattern of party-interest group relations seen between the parties of the Left and such groups. The classic case is, of course, the PCF-CGT connection. If one makes a comparison between MODEF and the CGT, one finds the same emphasis on political change, the primacy of the political party and the same blurring of the distinction between politics and economics. Nevertheless, MODEF created a strategy of its own for reconciling independence with political sympathy. This strategy distinguished it from its forerunner, the CGPT, and from other alleged satellite organizations of the PCF. It has already been seen that such a classification is inaccurate in MODEF's case, but it is interesting to consider the differences between MODEF and the CGT.

Unlike the CGT, MODEF took care to avoid identification with the PCF. At the most elementary level, there was the absence of MODEF leaders in public roles in the national party apparatus. At most, MODEF leaders confined their activities to the party's Agricultural Commission and to membership of Federal Committees. Secondly, care was taken to avoid being seen to line up with the PCF on issues which divided the Left. The only case of explicit identification with the PCF, rather than with the Left as a whole, the intervention of Frederic Lindenstaedt in the 1981 Presidential election campaign, was striking, precisely because of its exceptional nature. Thirdly, the political ambitions of members of other parties were encouraged and facilitated. Fourthly, there was little evidence that the members of the various parties within MODEF organized themselves as factions. To the limited extent that this took place, the guilty party was more often than not the PS rather than the PCF. Most distinctive of all was, however, the refusal of MODEF to subordinate its own internal and external concerns to those of the PCF during electoral campaigns.

The emphasis on unity rather than discipline and homogeneity not only assisted MODEF in its growth and ensured its survival, but also provided a trend-setting example for the Left as a whole. MODEF's foundation in 1959 was an indicator of the first tentative steps towards the Union of the Left. Its peak electoral performance of 1974-76 coincided with the high points of the Union of the Left whilst its ability to weather the storm of 1977-81 also demonstrated the possibility of continuing co-operation between the fragments of the divided Left. In this respect, MODEF was a pathfinder for the ostensibly more advanced urban Left.

MODEF's small but significant role in the eventual downfall of the Right in 1981 was not limited to propaganda by example. Though the FFA may have undermined MODEF in western France, the presence of MODEF prevented the Poujadist-style approach of the FFA from succeeding in the south. MODEF's achievement was to prevent anti-capitalist resistance from taking on anti-working class forms. By doing so, MODEF made a certain electoral contribution to the fortunes of the Left. In the first phase, the loyalty of a certain section of the farm population was maintained, to the benefit of the parties of the Left. Later, a new layer of support was secured, both groups contributing to the fragile mathematics of May 1981.

Nevertheless, MODEF's most significant contribution was the way in which it helped to cement the alliance of the rural and urban Left. MODEF's capacity to produce and train leaders who were eventually able to, not only secure the support which MODEF required, but also personify the cross-class alliance implied by the Union of the Left. The election of such leaders to political office, particularly in semi-urban cantons and



communes, was highly effective in this respect. Though agriculture may not have been a high priority for the parties of the Left, such actions spoke louder than their indifference. At a low cost, these parties could rely on MODEF to produce the activists needed to establish the former's right and capacity to govern.

Though this might appear to be a positive balance sheet to the external observer, as it does to this one, the post-1981 MODEF finds itself in a difficult position. The problem is that MODEF's commitment to the family farm, unlike that of past organizations, is entirely genuine. Although it stresses the need for political change as a pre-condition for the successful defence of the family farm, this remains simply a pre-condition of success and is not an end in itself. Since 1981, MODEF has been in the uncomfortable position of not knowing whether the fulfillment of the pre-condition of political change in fact makes any difference to the future of the family farm. Given the evolution of socialist policy, MODEF has yet to see its hopes realized. Though the positive benefit of official recognition has been secured, the implications of the PS state for the future of the family farm are far from clear. Added to the fear that political change may not be the panacea it was expected to be is the knowledge that any alternative, in the shape of a re-invigorated Right, would be even worse. MODEF's changed status since 1981 therefore presents MODEF with many dangers, not the least of which is disillusionment.

Ironically, the presence of the Left in government creates a threat to the continued existence of MODEF, just as it poses a threat for the Left as a whole. The major advantage of the 1981 elections is not so the change of policy, but the fact that the alibis of the parties of the

Left have been destroyed. Confronting the problems of government, instead of striking poses in opposition, the politics of "la revendication" are no longer possible. Whatever the outcome of the present experiment, the Union of the Left and Mitterrandism will have made a major contribution if such politics are replaced by a more coherent strategy based on the twin principles of securing power and establishing clarity on the objects of the exercise of power. This is the challenge which now confronts MODEF. Its capacity to produce new answers to these questions will determine whether it will be able to perform the entirely creditable and essential role in the future which it has carried out with such vigour and determination in the past.

## APPENDIX A CHAMBER OF AGRICULTURE ELECTION RESULTS: FRANCE 1964-1979



Seats won by MODEF independently or in alliance



MODEF slates obtaining 40-49% of vote



MODEF slates obtaining 25-39% of vote



MODEF slates obtaining less than 25% of vote

CHAMBER OF AGRICULTURE ELECTION RESULTS: FRANCE 1964



SOURCE: L'EXPLOITANT FAMILIAL FEBRUARY 1964

CHAMBER OF AGRICULTURE ELECTION RESULTS: FRANCE 1967



SOURCE: Y. TAVERNIER 'LE MODEF' REVUE FRANCAISE DE SCIENCE POLITIQUE  
48 (1968) 542-563 p. 547

Due to missing data the key used here differs.

Seats won by MODEF independently or in alliance



MODEF slates obtaining 26-49 % of vote



MODEF slates obtaining less than 25% of vote



## CHAMBER OF AGRICULTURE ELECTION RESULTS: FRANCE 1970



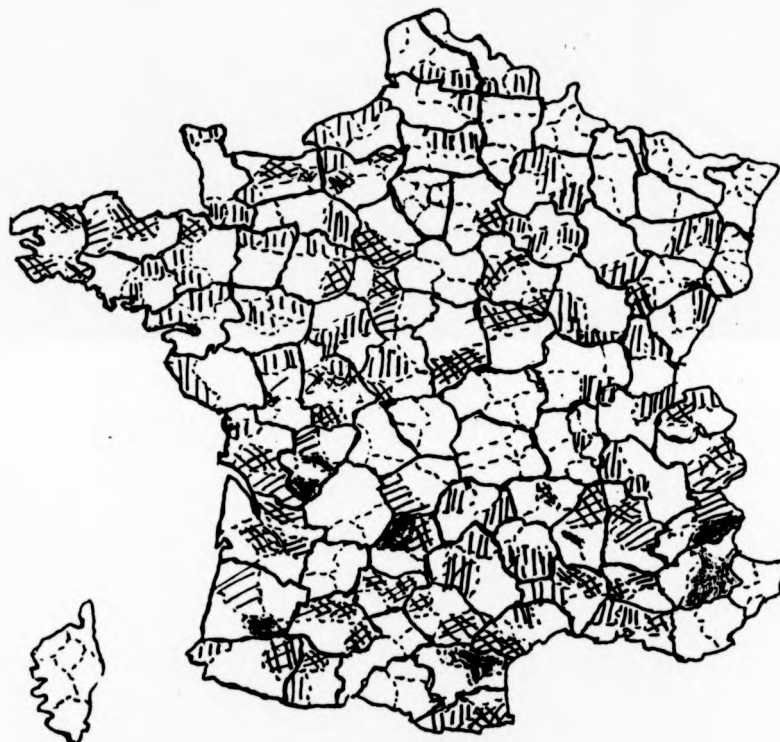
SOURCE: L'EXPLOITANT FAMILIAL MAY 1970

## CHAMBER OF AGRICULTURE ELECTION RESULTS: FRANCE 1974



SOURCE: L'EXPLOITANT FAMILIAL MARCH - 1974

CHAMBER OF AGRICULTURE ELECTION RESULTS: FRANCE 1976



SOURCE: L'EXPLOITANT FAMILIAL FEBRUARY 1976



## CHAMBER OF AGRICULTURE ELECTION RESULTS: FRANCE 1979



SOURCE: L'EXPLOITANT FAMILIAL FEBRUARY 1979





References Chapter 1

1. For the possibilities and the limitations of case studies, see H. Eckstein, 'Case Study and Theory in Political Science', in F. Greenstein and N. Polsby (eds) Handbook of Political Science (Reading, Ma. Addison-Wesley, 1975), Vol 7, 79-138
2. For Table 1.1, the difference index is calculated by adding the difference in the scores between the norm and each group, then by dividing by the number of cases. For Table 1.2, the differences calculated are those between each group and the other groups.
3. See below
4. R. Maspétiol, L'Ordre Eternel des Champs (Paris, Medici, 1946), p. 466
5. Maspétiol, L'Ordre Eternel des Champs, p. 467
6. Maspétiol, L'Ordre Eternel des Champs, p. 473
7. Maspétiol, L'Ordre Eternel des Champs, pp. 570-571
8. J. Klatzmann, L'Agriculture Française (Paris, Seuil, 1978), p. 27
9. Klatzmann, L'Agriculture Française, pp. 30-45
10. M. Gervais, C. Servolin and J. Weil, Une France sans Paysans (Paris, Seuil, 1965), pp. 84-87

11. J. Maho and N. Cristin, 'Visions de la Societe et Groupes d'Opinion dans un Village Creusois', Revue Francaise de Sociologie, 6 (1965), 96-104
12. H. Mendras, Sociologie de la Campagne Francaise (Paris, Presses universitaires de France, 1965)
13. M. Lenco, 'Etablissement d'une Typologie Objective des Exploitations Agricoles Françaises', Statistique Agricole, 1973, Supplement to Serie Etudes No.116,
14. Mendras, La Fin des Paysans (Paris, SEDEIS, 1967)
15. Mendras, La Fin des Paysans, p. 315
16. A. Burguiere, Bretons de Plozévet (Paris, Flammarion, 1977), pp. 193-195
17. S. Sokoloff, 'Rural Change and Farming Politics: A Terminal Peasantry', In P. Cerny and M. Schlaim, French Politics and Public Policy (London, Methuen, 1980), 218-242
18. Sokoloff, 'Rural Change and Farming Politics', pp. 233-234
19. C. Landauer, 'The Guesdists and the French Farmer: The Early Erosion of French Marxism', International Review of Social History, 6 (1961), 212-225
20. K. Marx, Capital, Vol 1 (London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1974), p. 699

11. J. Maho and N. Cristin, 'Visions de la Societe et Groupes d'Opinion dans un Village Creusois', Revue Francaise de Sociologie, 6 (1965), 96-104
12. H. Mendras, Sociologie de la Campagne Francaise (Paris, Presses universitaires de France, 1965)
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14. Mendras, La Fin des Paysans (Paris, SEDEIS, 1967)
15. Mendras, La Fin des Paysans, p. 315
16. A. Burguiere, Bretons de Plozévet (Paris, Flammarion, 1977), pp. 193-195
17. S. Sokoloff, 'Rural Change and Farming Politics: A Terminal Peasantry', In P. Cerny and M. Schlaim, French Politics and Public Policy (London, Methuen, 1980), 218-242
18. Sokoloff, 'Rural Change and Farming Politics', pp. 233-234
19. C. Landauer, 'The Guesdists and the French Farmer: The Early Erosion of French Marxism', International Review of Social History, 6 (1961), 212-225
20. K. Marx, Capital, Vol 1 (London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1974), p. 699

21. See below, ch. 2
  
22. G. Lukacs, History and Class Consciousness (London, Merlin, 1971), p. 21
  
23. P. Sorokin and C.C. Zimmermann, Principles of Rural-Urban Sociology (New York, Henry Holt, 1969), p. 62
  
24. See M. Bouvier-Ajam and G. Mury, Les Classes Sociales en France, Vol 1 (Paris, Editions Sociales, 1963), p. 29. This gives an optimistic view of the possibility of determining class-in-itself.
  
25. For a summary of the debate and a bibliography, see D. Goodman and M. Redclift, From Peasant to Proletarian (Oxford, Blackwell, 1981)
  
26. For the rural proletarian argument, see V. Figueiredo, 'Agricultural Workers and Political Participation', paper presented to European Consortium for Political Research workshop, Florence, 1980
  
27. For an extreme case of farmerphobia, see M. Gutelman, Structures et Réformes Agraires (Paris, Maspero, 1979), pp. 120-121. Gutelman argues that even the smallest-scale farmer is an exploiter if agricultural policies ensure that he receives a higher price than the natural market price. Extending this theory to other fields would mean that anyone who receives state transfer payments, such as civil servants, students and unemployed, must also be considered an exploiter. It is doubtful, given Gutelman's political perspectives, that he would be proud of his contribution to Friedmanism.

On the difficulties of the empirical validation of the concept of exploitation, see A. Mollard, Paysans Exploités: Essai sur la Question Paysanne (Grenoble, Presses universitaires de Grenoble, 1977), ch. 9. He also argues the opposite case to Gutelman.

28. See below where Servolin's theory of class is described.
29. Goodman and Redclift, From Peasant to Proletarian, ch. 1.
30. F. Clavaud and G. Marchais, Les Communistes et les Paysans (Paris, Editions Sociales, 1972), p. 49
31. F. Parkin, Class Inequality and Political Order (London, Granada, 1979). A. Marwick, Class: Image and Reality in Britain, France and the USA since 1930 (London, Fontana/Collins, 1981)
32. B. Lambert, Les Paysans dans la Lutte des Classes (Paris, Seuil, 1970)
33. Lambert, Les Paysans dans la Lutte des Classes, pp. 69-70
34. Ch. 6 deals with the role of various types of agricultural organizations, such as the co-operatives and the Credit Agricole.
35. S. Berger and M.J. Piore, Dualism and Discontinuity in Industrial Society (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1980). This deals with the persistence of non-capitalist sectors in the modern economy. It is an interesting example of an apparently unconscious translation of themes raised ten years earlier by European Marxists



into the terminology of American sociology.

36. C. Servolin, 'L'Absorption de l'Agriculture dans le Mode de Production Capitaliste', in Y. Tavernier, M.Gervais and C. Servolin (eds), L'Univers Politique des Paysans dans la France Contemporaine (Paris, A. Colin/FNSP, 1972), 41-78
37. Servolin, 'L'Absorption de l'Agriculture dans le Mode de Production Capitaliste', p. 76
38. For a summary of modernization theory, see H. Bernstein, 'Modernization Theory and the Sociological Study of Development', Journal of Development Studies, 7 (1971), 141-160
39. L.A. Loubère, Radicalism in Mediterranean France (Albany, State University Press of New York, 1977), p. 1
40. P. Gratton, Les Paysans Francais contre l'Agrarisme (Paris, Maspero, 1972), p. 39
41. C. Harman, Class Struggles in Eastern Europe 1945-83 (London, Pluto, 1983), p. 287
42. T. Judt, Socialism in Provence 1871-1914: A Study in the Origins of the Modern French Left (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 272-274. However, most of the book is devoted to showing precisely how politicization occurred. Indeed, it would be impossible to write on the politics of agriculture in southern France without making frequent reference to this stimulating book.

Judt writes: "...any attempt to account for political choice which seems to isolate one factor... and ascribe ideological options to it, does violence both to the complexity of an historical explanation, and also to the voluntaristic element in political choices. The peasantry of the Midi did not respond to left-wing politics in such a Pavlovian fashion...". p. 139

Rural de-industrialization is a well-documented tendency. See J-F. Viple, Sociologie Politique de l'Allier (Paris, Pichon-Durand-Auzias), pp. 12-13. See also L. Wylie, Village in the Vaucluse (Cambridge, Ma. Harvard University Press, 1964), p. 292

For a comparative dimension, see L.M. Cullen, 'The Irish Economy in the Eighteenth Century', in L.M. Cullen (ed), The Formation of the Irish Economy (Cork, Mercier, 1969), 9-22

43. K. Marx, Class Struggles in France (London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1942), p. 119
44. P. Georges, 'Anciennes et Nouvelles Classes Sociales dans les Campagnes Francaises', Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie, 37 (1964), 3-22
45. E. Wolf, quoted by R. Alapuro, 'On the Political Mobilization of the Agrarian Population in Finland', Scandinavian Political Studies, 11 (1976), 51-76
46. This is dealt with in greater detail in ch. 2
47. A. Stinchcombe, 'Agricultural Enterprise and Rural Class

- Relations', American Journal of Sociology, 67 (1961) 165-176
48. J. Linz, 'Patterns of Land Tenure, Division of Labour and Voting Behaviour in Europe', Comparative Politics, 8 (1976), 365-430
  49. Evidence in support of this assumption is presented in ch. 2
  50. E. Wolf, 'Peasants and Political Mobilization', Comparative Studies in History and Society, 16 (1975), 201-234
  51. G. Therborn, The Power of Ideology and the Ideology of Power (London, Verso, 1980), p. 9
  52. For an Althusserian critique of the polemical biases of much of the "protest" literature, see R. Jenkins, 'The Study of Violence', in R. Benewick and T. Smith (eds), Direct Action and Democratic Politics (London, Allen and Unwin, 1972), 100-108
  53. E. Vallance, 'Three Languages of Change: Democracy, Technocracy and Direct Action', in Benewick and Smith (eds), Direct Action and Democratic Politics, 87-99. This adopts the former approach. A. Marsh, Protest and Political Consciousness (London, Sage, 1977) discusses the problem. See ch. 2 in particular.
  54. S. Hoffmann, Le Mouvement Poujade (Paris, A. Colin/FNSP, 1956), pp. 386-7
  55. This will be seen clearly in ch. 7 and ch. 8 which deal with the relations between MODEF, the political parties and the state.

56. Wylie, Village in the Vaucluse, p. 336
57. A. Siegfried, Geographie Electorale de l'Ardeche sous la Troisieme Republique (Paris, A. Colin, 1949). A. Siegfried, Tableau Politique de la France de l'Ouest sous la Troisieme Republique (Paris, A. Colin, 1964)
58. Judt, Socialism in Provence, pp. 6-7
59. Judt, Socialism in Provence, pp. 108-109
60. S. Tarrow, Peasant Communism in Southern Italy (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1967), p. 189
61. Judt, Socialism in Provence, p. 138-140
62. A. Blok, 'South Italian Agro-Towns', Comparative Studies in History and Society, 11 (1969), 121-135
63. G. de Berthier de Sauvigny, 'Population Movements and Political Change in Nineteenth Century France', Review of Politics, 19 (1957), 411-425
64. For the rural exodus of 1950s France, see ch. 2. For a comparative dimension, see F.S.L. Lyons, Ireland since the Famine (London, Fontana/Collins, 1973), p. 44
65. Judt, Socialism in Provence, pp. 117-123
66. Judt, Socialism in Provence, p. 237

67. Marsh, Protest and Political Consciousness, ch. 6. This contains a full discussion of relative deprivation theory.
68. J.C. Scott, 'Peasant Revolution: A Dismal Science', Comparative Politics, 9 (1977), 231-248
69. E. Muller, cited by Marsh, Protest and Political Consciousness, p. 153
70. G. Wright, Rural Revolution in France (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1964), p. 163. Further quote from the farmer-writer Emile Guillaumin, cited by Mendras, Sociologie de la Campagne Francaise, p. 92. See also Wylie, Village in the Vaucluse, the work of Mendras and of the Groupe de Sociologie Rurale directed by him. In particular, the special issue of Revue Francaise de Sociologie, 6 (1965) devoted to the transformation of rural France makes heavy use of the concept.
71. Marsh, Protest and Political Consciousness, p. 125
72. Marsh, Protest and Political Consciousness, p. 125
73. M. Crozier, The Bureaucratic Phenomenon (London, Tavistock, 1964), p. 218, pp. 221-222
74. Crozier, The Bureaucratic Phenomenon, p. 248
75. H. Machin, The Prefect in French Public Administration (London, Croom Helm, 1977), p. 118

76. C. Tilly, 'Does Modernization Breed Revolution', Comparative Politics, 5 (1973) 425-447
77. H. Ehrmann, 'The French Peasant and Communism', American Political Science Review, 46 (1952), 19-43
78. Ehrmann, 'The French Peasant and Communism', p. 19
79. The difficulty of sustaining such "progressive" types of protest has been manifested by the careers of some of the "wild men" of the 1950s and 1960s. Either such protestors become part of the "Establishment" or drift into isolation. For example, Michel Debatisse became a Giscardian minister in 1979 whilst Alexis Gourvennec became a highly successful farmer and managing director of Brittany Ferries. On the other hand, Bernard Lambert became a theoretician of the agricultural far Left.
80. C. Tilly, The Vendée (London, Edward Arnold, 1964). Barrington Moore Jnr, Social Origins of Democracy and Dictatorship (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1969). Tarrow, Peasant Communism in Southern Italy. E. Hobsbawm, Primitive Rebels (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1971)
81. See Hobsbawm, Primitive Rebels, pp. 154-156
82. C. Geneletti, 'On the Political Orientation of Agrarian Classes: A Theory', Archives Europeennes de Sociologie, 17 (1976), 55-73
83. N. Eizner and M. Cristin, 'Premieres Hypotheses Comparatives sur

Trois Monographies', Revue Francaise de Sociologie, 6 (1965), 55-73

84. Mendras, Sociologie de la Campagne Francaise, ch. 1
85. Moore, Social Origins of Democracy and Dictatorship, pp. 92-101
86. No value judgements are intended by the use of the terms "progressive" and "reactionary". It is simply designed to distinguish between movements associated with the Left and those linked to the Right.
87. Tilly, The Vendée, particularly ch. 12
88. S. Berger, Peasants against Politics: Rural Organization in Brittany 1911-1972 (Cambridge, Ma. Harvard University Press, 1972)
89. Tarrow, Peasant Communism in Southern Italy, pp. 1-5
90. Tilly, The Vendée, ch. 13
91. Tarrow, Peasant Communism in Southern Italy, ch. 4

References Chapter 2

1. Y. Tavernier, M. Gervais and M. Jollivet, Histoire de la France Rurale, Vol 4 (Paris, Seuil, 1977). For agriculture during the Fourth Republic and the early stages of the Fifth, see Wright, Rural Revolution in France. For economic change, see Gervais, Servolin and Weil, Une France sans Paysans. On the sociological aspects, see Mendras, La Fin des Paysans.
2. Statistique Agricole Annuelle, 1954, pp. 155-157. Recensement General de l'Agriculture, France Entière, 1980, p. 4. Hereafter referred to as RGAFE.
3. K. Marx, Capital, Vol 1, p. 407
4. This increase outstripped the rise in incomes. See Statistique Agricole Annuelle, 1954, p. VII for the number of farmers, p. 171 for the amount of loans. Annuaire Statistique de la France 1980, p. 167 for the number of farmers, p. 159 for loans.
5. Title of a book by R.T and B.T Anderson describing the exodus from one village. Bus Stop to Paris: The Transformation of a French Village, (Garden City, Double Day, 1965)
6. One farmer in the Charente described the changes which modernization and mechanization brought to the working day. "Dans le temps on avait la casse croûte à 9 heures dans les champs, on faisait la sieste à midi, on apportait à manger à 4 heures dans le champs. Plus de ça maintenant." Conversation, Ste Sévère, Charente



February 1981.

7. RGAFE 1980, p. 9
8. RGAFE 1980, p. 8
9. RGAFE 1980, p. 8
10. RGAFE 1980, p. 8. This includes land simply abandoned or converted to non-agricultural uses such as urbanization, secondary residences, etc.
11. This is especially true in Provence. For example, the Calavon valley around Apt consists of poor agricultural land due to the lack of irrigation. On the other hand, it is a very attractive area for tourism and holiday homes. Farmers are often unable to compete on the property market. One MODEF official interviewed had Swiss, Swedish and German neighbours.
12. The SAFERS are described in ch. 6. On the judicial restrictions placed on the SAFERS, see J. Bonneau, 'Les SAFERS et la Politique Agricole des Structures', Revue des Sociétés, 95 (1977), 1-17.
13. For productivity and production figures, see J. Mairesse, L'Evolution du Capital Fixe Productif, (Paris, INSEE, Série C, 18-19), p. 51. For elasticities of demand for agricultural produce, see J. Marsh and C. Ritson, Agricultural Policy and the Common Market, (London, PEP, 1971). FAO estimates of elasticities

are presented on p. 170.

Although labour productivity rose, Mairesse calculates that the productivity of capital employed in agriculture declined throughout the 1950s and 1960s. p. 180

14. The main problem with the Revenu Brut d'Exploitation (RBE) national average is that it does not distinguish between regions and types of farms. Though on a local level it can be used to distinguish between types of farm, it cannot take the differing sizes of farms into account. Some departments have RBE indices less than half or more than twice the national average. The national average therefore disguises wide variations in the income of individual farmers. It also fails to take account of the differentials between costs of production on different sizes of farm. Finally, it excludes certain costs of production from the calculation of total costs, thus giving an exaggerated idea of disposable income. For RBE indices for the 1960s, see INSEE, Résultats d'Ensemble des Comptes 1959-66, Série C, No. 7, 1968, p. 230
15. E. Pisani, La France dans le Conflit Economique Mondial, (Paris, Hachette, 1979). J. Bombal and P. Chalmin, L'Agro-alimentaire, (Paris, Presses universitaires de France, 1980).
16. Except of course for certain specialist firms and their traditional links with foreign markets, for instance, Bordeaux, Champagne and Cognac with the UK.
17. See Pisani, La France dans le Conflit Economique Mondial, p. 234

for the view that French agriculture is too dependent on EEC markets.

18. See Vent d'Ouest, December 1979, May 1980 for a discussion of vertical integration. This is the journal of the Paysan Travailleur tendency and is particularly valuable given that so many of the group are themselves "integrated". See ch. 3 for the role of the Cognac merchants and the increasing controversy surrounding them. See also Tribune Socialiste, April 1980.
  
19. Les Marchés Agricoles, 15 December 1980.
  
20. For the PINEA index, see Annuaire Statistique de la France 1980, p. 564. This has been adjusted to bring its base into line with the agricultural and retail price index. For retail price index, see Annuaire Statistique de la France 1980, p. 570 and Annuaire Statistique de la France 1975, p. 484. For agricultural prices, see Annuaire Statistique de la France 1980, p. 562 For costs of production figures, see Les Marchés Agricoles, 15 December 1980.
  
21. Etienne Hirsch, quoted in R. Kuisel, Capitalism and the State in Modern France, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 264
  
22. Y. Tavernier, 'Le Syndicalisme Paysan et la Politique Agricole du Gouvernement (juin 1958-avril 1962)', Revue Francaise de Science Politique, 12 (1962), 599-646, p. 634
  
23. M. Laligant, L'Intervention de l'Etat dans le Secteur Agricole, (Aix-Marseille, Université d'Aix-Marseille, Thèse de doctorat,

- 1967), p. 264. Y. Tavernier, 'Une Nouvelle Administration pour l'Agriculture: La Réforme du Ministère', Revue Française de Science Politique, 17 (1967), 889-917.
24. Y. Tavernier and G. Rimareix, 'L'Elaboration et le Vote de la Loi Complementary à la Loi d'Orientation Agricole', Revue Française de Science Politique, 13 (1963), 383-425. This explains the political and administrative reasons which led Pisani to propose a new Act rather than to implement the Debre Act by delegated legislation.
25. This was, of course, anathema to the more conservative FNSEA leaders who still supported the idea of "l'unité paysanne", the fundamental unity between all categories of farmers. See Gervais, Servolin and Weil, Une France sans Paysans, ch. 4 for a discussion of this CNJA typology.
26. Journal Officiel, 19 July 1962. Rochereau had talked of the need to organize the exodus in the 1960 debate. See Journal Officiel, 29 April 1960.
27. Journal Officiel, 5 July 1980
28. For instance, see the speech by Andre Cellard, who became junior Agriculture minister in 1981, in the Assembly debate. Journal Officiel, 10 April 1980.
29. See Journal Officiel, 19 July 1962. Speeches by Louis Briot (UNR, Aube) and Jean Degraeve (UNR, Marne).

30. The four main determinants of the degree of financial security are:
- a) Age since young farmers normally have much larger interest repayments to meet in order to finance acquisition of land and machinery;
  - b) ideology since those who take the modernization propaganda most seriously are more likely to make unsafe investments;
  - c) size of farm since this determines the absolute limits on income;
  - d) contingency since certain investments are very seldom made but may nevertheless be necessary at a specific time. If such investments fall due at the wrong time, serious problems may be caused.
31. Laligant, L'Intervention de l'Etat dans le Secteur Agricole, p. 300. See also N. Heathcote, 'Agricultural Politics in the European Community', (Canberra, Australian National University, Department of Political Science, Occasional Paper No. 7), particularly pp. 18-19. For a description of the complexity of the CAP, see R. Fennell, The Common Agricultural Policy of the European Economic Community, (London, Granada, 1979)
32. It is arguable that the whole of the 1960 Act was window dressing. This was certainly the attitude of the unreconstructed Ministry of Agriculture which dragged its feet over the drawing up and implementation of the circulars and decrees required to implement the Act. See Tavernier and Rimareix, 'L'Elaboration et le Vote de

la Loi Complémentaire à la Loi d'Orientation Agricole', Revue Française de Science Politique, p. 387

33. The coincidence between a larger than usual increase in 1981 and the Presidential election did not escape notice.
34. See S. Holland, Uncommon Market, (London, MacMillan, 1980), pp. 35-40. Holland argues that the EEC failed to achieve the liberal paradise of its prophets precisely because the EEC bureaucracy was too ambitious and failed to recognize the importance of "national interest".
35. For a full description of the Mansholt Plan, see Marsh and Ritson, Agricultural Policy and the Common Market, pp. 25-28
36. Commission des Communautés Européennes, 'Réflexions sur la Politique Agricole Commune', Bulletin des Communautés Européennes, supplément 6/1980.

The corresponsibility tax was inspired by the milk lake and butter mountain of the mid-1970s. During 1974-1975, the EEC had sufficient milk powder stocks to supply itself, the USA and still maintain a large and costly surplus. Les Marchés Agricoles, 15 December 1980. Obviously such a situation could not continue without bankrupting the FEOGA. However, the tax, at least as far as France is concerned, appears to be ineffective. In 1969, 9,639,000 cows produced 261,035,500 hectolitres. In 1978, 9,980,231 cows produced 300,655,000 hectolitres. Statistique Agricole Annuelle, 1970, 1979. The development of milk production

has obviously not been hindered too seriously by the imposition of the tax.

A regional analysis reveals why the EEC has a bad name in many areas. Falls in milk yields have taken place in the richer regions, such as Ile de France and Picardie, where alternative and more profitable possibilities of production were already leading to reductions in milk production. On the other hand, certain regions where dairy farming is one of the few possibilities open, such as the Auvergne, Limousin and Brittany, have been forced to produce more in order to maintain income levels. Therefore the only net effect has been to alienate the already deprived regions whilst the richer regions continue to receive subsidies. This brief analysis is based on the figures in the volumes of Statistique Agricole Annuelle for the period 1970-1979.

37. For example, in 1978 the following exchanges took place between France and the rest of the EEC:

<u>Product</u>	<u>Imports</u>	<u>Exports (000s of francs)</u>
Meat	6,524,658	2,447,863
Milk	2,032,098	3,928,643
Fruit	846,353	1,557,945
Cereals	922,226	9,774,880

Source: Statistique du Commerce Extérieur de la France 1978,  
Ministere du Budget, pp. 1001-1015.

38. For the effects of the MCAs, see G.H. Peters, 'The Green Pound', Journal of Agricultural Economics, 31 (1980), 113-120
39. This is clearly appreciated by many farmers themselves as became apparent in many interviews with MODEF activists from various departments.
40. M. Agulhon, La République au Village, (Paris, Plon, 1970), pp. 1-5
41. E. Weber, Peasants into Frenchmen, (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1976). See ch. 15 in general and p. 263 in particular.
42. For a classic account of this process, see E. Grenadou and A. Prévost, Grenadou: Paysan Français, (Paris, Seuil, 1966)
43. Tavernier, Gervais and Jollivet, Histoire de la France Rurale, Vol 4, p. 250
44. Tavernier, Gervais and Jollivet, Histoire de la France Rurale, Vol 4, p. 285
45. Tavernier, Gervais and Jollivet, Histoire de la France Rurale, Vol 4, p. 251
46. See C. Harmel, Est-Ouest, 16-31 January 1966. "C'est évidemment sur le MODEF que le PCF a reporté les esperances mises autrefois par lui, soit dans la CGPT, soit dans la CGA première manière. C'est sur lui qu'ils comptent pour organiser l'agitation à leur



profit dans les campagnes", p. 24. See also ch. 7 below which deals with the relationship between MODEF and the Left.

47. Interview, Raymond Mineau, Angoulême, November 1980.
  
48. P. Gratton, Les Luittes de Classes dans les Campagnes, (Paris, Anthropos, 1971). Details of FTSF programme are found on p. 31, Guesdism is analysed pp. 34-36 and Engels' letter is quoted on p. 41.
  
49. Gratton, Les Paysans Français contre l'Agrarisme, gives details of CGPT and CNP zones of influence, pp. 109-110.
  
50. C. Mesliand, 'L'Economie Agricole et la Société Paysanne 1930-1958', in C. Mesliand (ed), La Politique Economique de l'Imperialisme Français de 1930 a 1958, (Paris, Editions Sociales, 1974), 75-99
  
51. MODEF training document entitled 'Le MODEF, ses Origines, son Activité, ses Buts', undated
  
52. Confederation Générale des Paysans Travailleurs, La Charte Revendicative des Paysans de France, Resolution adopted by 6th Congress, CGPT, 1939. MODEF declaration, 7 April 1959, reproduced by F. Tello, 'Données sur l'Origine et l'Implantation du MODEF', Cahiers d'Histoire de l'Institut Maurice Thorez, 28 (1978), 39-80. The MODEF document is on pp. 58-60. See also Gratton, Les Paysans Français contre l'Agrarisme, pp. 133-137 for details of the activity of the CGPT

53. Tavernier, Gervais, Jollivet, Histoire de la France Rurale, Vol 4, pp. 411-412.
54. This discretion and the desire to make a sharper distinction between politics and unionism has not been confined to MODEF. Perhaps the most lasting influence of the JAC and the CNJA has been the de-politicization of farm unionism. Though FNSEA leaders such as Michel Debatisse and Pierre Comorèche adopted a high political profile in the later stages of the Giscardian regime, the FNSEA has not returned to the political role which it played under the leadership of Rene Blondelle, who became a Senator and leader of the Parliamentary agricultural lobby of the Fourth Republic.
55. On PCF apathy to Renaud Jean's schemes, see G. Walter, Histoire des Paysans de France, (Paris, Flammarion, 1963), p. 451
56. Wright, Rural Revolution in France, pp. 20-21, pp. 35-36
57. For the "cultivateurs cultivants", see Tavernier, Gervais, Jollivet, Histoire de la France Rurale, Vol 4, pp. 419-422. For the Entente Paysanne, see P. Barral, Les Agrariens Français de Meline à Pisani, (Paris, A. Colin/FNSP, 1968), p. 208
58. Quoted by H. de Montbron, L'Action Syndicale dans l'Agriculture, (Paris, Sirey, 1965), p. 71
59. Berger, Peasants against Politics

60. See the remarks made by M. Chillaud, secretary of the Federation des Associations Agricoles de la Charente in November 1922. Chillaud blamed the difficulties of agriculture on the Eight hour Law. "N'est pas, en effet, quelque chose de révoltant que 133 ans après la Revolution, dans un pays de liberté comme doit être le pays de France, patrons et ouvriers ne puissent pas, lorsqu'ils sont d'accord, travailler comme il leur convient." Remarks of this nature were frequently repeated by agricultural spokesmen.

Another Charente agricultural leader, M. Chevalier, also regretted the fact that the Eight Hours law had ensured that "les jeunes aspirent à plus de liberté, de plaisir, de douceur... Tous rêvent d'un coquet logement, de congés, de vacances, de voyages à prix réduit, de retraite." See Archives départementales de la Charente, File M1471.

61. Tavernier, Gervais and Jollivet, Histoire de la France Rurale, Vol 4, p. 347
62. Wright, Rural Revolution in France, p. 88. See also I. Boussard, Vichy et la Corporation Paysannne, (Paris, FNSP, 1980).
63. Wright, Rural Revolution in France, pp. 104-109
64. Tavernier, Gervais and Jollivet, Histoire de la France Rurale, Vol 4, p. 456. Gratton, Les Paysans Français contre l'Agrarisme, p. 12
65. Gratton, Les Paysans Français contre l'Agrarisme, pp. 216-218

60. See the remarks made by M. Chillaud, secretary of the Federation des Associations Agricoles de la Charente in November 1922. Chillaud blamed the difficulties of agriculture on the Eight hour Law. "N'est pas, en effet, quelque chose de révoltant que 133 ans après la Revolution, dans un pays de liberté comme doit être le pays de France, patrons et ouvriers ne puissent pas, lorsqu'ils sont d'accord, travailler comme il leur convient." Remarks of this nature were frequently repeated by agricultural spokesmen.

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61. Tavernier, Gervais and Jollivet, Histoire de la France Rurale, Vol 4, p. 347
62. Wright, Rural Revolution in France, p. 88. See also I. Boussard, Vichy et la Corporation Paysanne, (Paris, FNSP, 1980).
63. Wright, Rural Revolution in France, pp. 104-109
64. Tavernier, Gervais and Jollivet, Histoire de la France Rurale, Vol 4, p. 456. Gratton, Les Paysans Français contre l'Agrarisme, p. 12
65. Gratton, Les Paysans Français contre l'Agrarisme, pp. 216-218

66. Gratton, Les Paysans Français contre l'Agrarisme, p. 218
67. This was much to the displeasure of the prefect. Letter from the prefect to the Ministers of Agriculture and the Interior, 28 January 1952. File 11M-116, Archives Departementales des Landes.
68. La Croix, 8 December 1953. Wright, Rural Revolution in France, p. 126
69. Interview with Raymond Mineau, Angoulême, November 1980. See also Wright, Rural Revolution in France, p. 128.
70. Interview with Raymond Mineau, Angoulême, November 1980.
71. Y. Tavernier, 'Le Mouvement pour la Défense de l'Exploitation Familial', Revue Francaise de Science Politique, 18 (1968), 542-563, p. 544
72. Hoffmann, Le Mouvement Poujade, p. 335
73. Y. Tavernier, 'Le Mouvement pour la Défense de l'Exploitation Familial', in Tavernier, Gervais, and Servolin, (eds) 467-496, p. 477
74. Tello, 'Données sur l'Origine et l'Implantation du MODEF', Cahiers de l'Institut Maurice Thorez, p. 52
75. La Terre, 9 April 1959, 16 April 1959, 23 July 1959.

76. Tello, 'Données sur l'Origine et l'Implantation du MODEF', Cahiers de l'Institut Maurice Thorez, p. 46, p. 53.
77. Interviews with MODEF officials in the Vaucluse, June-July 1981.
78. Tello, 'Données sur l'Origine et l'Implantation du MODEF', Cahiers de l'Institut Maurice Thorez, gives details of 1959 attendance, p. 52. For 1982 Conference attendance, see Le Monde, 2 March 1982.
79. This became clear in the course of many interviews with MODEF activists over the period October 1980- November 1981. For a typical example of an appeal for membership and subscription returns, see the article by the national treasurer, Franck Marcade, in L'Exploitant Familial, February 1981.
80. R. Mouriaux, Les Syndicats dans la Société Française, (Paris, FNSP, 1983), p. 43.
81. This was admitted by MODEF's general secretary, Frederic Lindenstaedt, in an interview in November 1980. He also argued that electoral results were MODEF's own yardstick of success.
82. Tavernier avoids this problem in all his writings on MODEF. Tello, 'Données sur l'Origine et l'Implantation du MODEF', Cahiers de l'Institut Maurice Thorez, provides figures on p. 80. MODEF's own estimate was given by Lindenstaedt in an interview in November 1980.
83. This is based on interviews with MODEF, UDSEA de la Charente and Chamber of Agriculture officials in the department.

84. This distinction accounts for the discrepancies between the figures presented by Tavernier and Tello. There is also another problem. Apart from the farmers electoral college, there is also one for retired farmers in which MODEF has been fairly successful. The figures given here exclude them since the thesis is concerned with the role of MODEF as the representative of active farmers. The fact that retired farmers can vote is yet another anomaly of the Chamber of Agriculture electoral system.
85. The twenty-five per cent barrier has been chosen on this occasion since the only source of detailed figures which could be located for this election was Tavernier. Tavernier presents the results in such a way that it is only possible to distinguish between lists securing more or less than twenty-five per cent of the vote.
86. MODEF does not contest elections in the following departments; Allier, Alpes-Maritimes, Ariège, Creuse, Dordogne, Haute-Garonne, Lot-et-Garonne, Haute-Vienne and Puy-de-Dôme. This is explained in ch. 6.

### References chapter 3

1. See D. Derivy and M. Dogan, 'Unité d'Analyse et Espace de Reference en Ecologie Politique: Le Canton et le Département Français', Revue Française de Science Politique, 21 (1971), 517-570.
2. Judt, Socialism in Provence, p. 32
3. Recensement General de l'Agriculture 1979-80: La Charente, p. 16.  
Figures for grape harvesting machines supplied by Service Statistique, Direction Départementale de l'Agriculture de la Charente.
4. Recensement de l'Agriculture 1979-80: Le Vaucluse, pp. 14-16.
5. Statistique et Indicateurs des Régions Françaises, INSEE, Série R 45/46, p. 417.
6. Recensement General de l'Agriculture 1979-80: La Charente, p. 6.
7. Recensement General de l'Agriculture 1979-80: La Charente, p. 6.
8. Recensement General de l'Agriculture 1979-80: La Charente, p. 8.
9. Recensement de l'Agriculture 1979-80: Le Vaucluse, p. 9.
10. Le Coût de la Main-d'oeuvre en 1978, INSEE, Série M 96, p. 61.  
Bilan de l'Année 1978, INSEE, Direction Régional de Poitiers, p. 43



11. Bilan de l'Année 1978, INSEE, Direction Régional de Poitiers, p. 43
12. Official results supplied by Chambre d'Agriculture de la Charente.  
Thanks are due to the Chamber's research officer, M. J-P  
Malgouyres, for unearthing the long-lost transcripts.
13. These are the main activities in each region, not the exclusive  
ones. Most farmers in the Charente are polyculturalists to some  
extent but, in the vast majority of cases, it is clear that there  
is a dominant product on each farm.
14. For instance, as at Verdille, Rouillac, Bassac, Reignac, Gente,  
Barbezieux and several other locations. See J. Pinard, Les  
Industries du Poitou et des Charentes, (Poitiers, SFIL, 1972), p.  
198.
15. A three-star bottle requires at least two and a half years to age,  
a VSOP four and a half years and a Napoleon at least ten years.  
More exclusive types with even longer ageing periods are also made  
but not on a large scale.
16. Pinard, Les Industries du Poitou et des Charentes, p. 196.
17. La Charente Libre, 12 December 1980, 17 December 1980.
18. La Documentation Française, La Charente, (Paris, Notes et Etudes  
Documentaires, 1978), p.37.
19. La Charente Libre, 31 January 1981.

20. See ch. 6 for further details of this affair.
21. Calculated from figures supplied by Service Statistique, Direction Départementale de l'Agriculture de la Charente.
22. La Charente Libre, 12 November 1980. See also La Vie Charentaise, 21 March 1980.
23. Pinard, Les Industries du Poitou et des Charentes, p. 212.
24. Pinard, Les Industries du Poitou et des Charentes, p. 212.
25. Pinard, Les Industries du Poitou et des Charentes, p. 211.
26. La Documentation Française, La Charente, p. 37.
27. Service Statistique, Direction Départementale de l'Agriculture de la Charente, Recensement Général de l'Agriculture en Charente: Résultats Cantonaux en 1969-1970 et 1979-80, (Angoulême, 1981).
28. The description of the development of co-operatives given in the next section is also applicable to the cereal co-operatives.
29. Recensement Général de l'Agriculture 1979-80: La Charente, p. 15.
30. La Documentation Française, La Charente, p. 37.
31. P. Barrère, R. Heisch and S. Leirat, La Région du Sud-Ouest, (Paris, Presses universitaires de France, 1962), p. 29.

32. Pinard, Les Industries du Poitou et des Charentes, pp. 173-187.
33. La Charente Libre, 31 March 1981.
34. Interviews with MODEF dairy farmers, November 1980-May 1981.
35. Pinard, Les Industries du Poitou et des Charentes, p. 173.
36. La Charente Libre, 13 March 1981.
37. Clear benefits means positive advantages, not merely the avoidance of an even worse situation. Little sympathy can be won from the average farmer by arguing that the bad is the enemy of the worst.
38. P. Marciharcy, introduction to M. Bélanger, Le Pouvoir dans un Département Français: La Charente 1970-1973, (Angoulême, no publisher given, 1980), p. vi.
39. B.M.E. Leger, Les Opinions Politiques des Provinces Françaises, (Paris, Gambes, 1934), p. 68.
40. Leger, Les Opinions Politiques des Provinces Françaises, pp. 71-72.
41. Hoffmann, Le Mouvement Pujade, pp. 125-129.
42. Belanger, Le Pouvoir dans un Département Français: La Charente 1970-1973, p. 75.

43. Belanger, Le Pouvoir dans un Département Français: La Charente 1970-1973, p. 73.
44. D. Derivy, 'Analyse Ecologique du Vote Paysan', in Tavernier, Gervais and Servolin (eds), 131-162, p. 133 in particular.
45. The formula used is:  $\chi^2 = \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i}$   
 $C = \text{square root of } \frac{\chi^2}{\chi^2 + N}$
46. See ch. 4 below.
47. R. Grosso, 'Un Département à Forte Implantation du MODEF: Le Vaucluse', Revue de Géographie de Lyon, 53 (1978), 51-81. The results of Chamber of Agriculture elections have been compiled from figures in this article, from those supplied by the Service des Elections Professionnelles, Prefecture du Vaucluse and from details supplied by the MODEF president, Camille Fare.
48. La Documentation Française, Le Vaucluse, (Paris, Notes et Etudes Documentaires, 1978), p. 35.
49. La Marseillaise, 26 July 1981.
50. P. Langevin, L'Economie Provençale, (Aix-en-Provence, Edisud, 1981), p. 111.
51. P. Langevin, L'Economie Provençale, p. 125.

52. La Documentation Française, Le Vaucluse, p. 53.
53. P. Langevin, L'Economie Provencale, gives details of this process of the penetration of multinationals, such as Brooke Bond Liebeg, into the region. See p. 167. Many farmers interviewed also complained that the concentration of their potential purchasers gave them less possibility of selling their goods.
54. Interview, A. Clerc, vice-president of the MODEF Vaucluse Federation, L'Isle sur la Sorgue, June 1981.
55. B. Barbier, Villes et Centres des Alpes du Sud, (Gap, Ophrys, 1969), p. 73.
56. Grosso, 'Un Département à Forte Implantation du MODEF: Le Vaucluse', Revue de Geographie de Lyon, p. 78.
57. Le Provençal, 15 October 1981.
58. La Documentation Française, Le Vaucluse, p. 53.
59. Le Provençal, 18 May 1981. This summarizes a report on the subject issued by the Comité Technique des Légumes.
60. Le Provençal, 18 August 1981.
61. La Marseillaise, 17 September 1981.

62. The clearest example of the tendency to fall between two stools is the difficulty that certain Luberon producers have had selling their produce after reclassification from VDQS to AOC.
63. This is calculated from Recensement Général de l'Agriculture 1955: Caractéristiques Généraux des Exploitations and from figures supplied by Service Statistique, Direction Départementale de l'Agriculture du Vaucluse for the 1969-70 and the 1979-80 censuses.
64. Grosso, 'Un Département à Forte Implantation du MODEF: Le Vaucluse', Revue de Géographie de Lyon, pp. 77-79.
65. Grosso, 'Un Département à Forte Implantation du MODEF: Le Vaucluse', Revue de Géographie de Lyon, pp. 77-79.
66. Tavernier, 'Le MODEF', in Tavernier, Gervais and Servolin (eds), p. 479.
67. This refers to the impact of the EEC over the whole of MODEF's existence, not just the 1970s.
68. Service Statistique, Direction Départementale de l'Agriculture du Vaucluse, Résultats Economiques des Exploitations Agricoles en 1970: Le Vaucluse, (Avignon, 1977).
69. La Marseillaise, 24 June 1981. This contains a report of the conference of the Association Nationale des Vignerons Récoltants at which several clear expressions of hostility towards the co-operative sector were made.

70. Archives Departementales du Vaucluse, File 1M 842 on the surveillance of unions. Ironically, this evidence probably exists mainly because of the other tradition, reflecting Daladier's desire to spy on his constituents.
71. A. Autrand, Le Département du Vaucluse de la Défaite à la Liberation: Mai 1940-25 Août 1944, (Avignon, Aubanel, 1965). This book contains a mine of useful information wasted by an apparently apolitical attitude whose main purpose is to obscure the role of the PCF in the Resistance. See also Hoffmann, Le Mouvement Poujade, p. 202.
72. Autrand, Le Département du Vaucluse de la Défaite à la Liberation: Mai 1940-25 Aout 1944, p. 243.
73. See Guillamin, La Vie d'un Simple, pp. 137-138. "J'ai remarqué cent fois depuis que les pires ennemies des idées nouvelles sont les gens à reputation douteuse qui se mettent en vue sous couleur de les soutenir. Les meilleurs programmes se trouvent salis de ces contacts; les meilleurs candidats en sont discredités dans l'esprit de ceux qui, comme les neuf dixièmes des paysans et moi-même, n'ont pas d'opinion bien nette et se basent un peu sur leur sympathie instinctive à l'égard des représentants de chaque tendance." This historical view is perhaps too extreme for modern-day conditions but it does reveal a problem with which agricultural organizations still have to contend.

#### References Chapter 4

1. The concept of "institutional needs" was first used by Michels.  
See R. Michels, Political Parties, (Illinois, Glencoe Press, 1959)  
p. 408.
2. See ch. 8 for further details of press coverage of MODEF.
3. See ch. 6 for the connections between the FNSEA and the Chambers of Agriculture.
4. R. Grosso, 'Un Département à Forte Implantation du MODEF', p. 69
5. See virtually any issue of L'Exploitant Familial, e.g. February 1981.
6. Interview with Raymond Mineau, Angoulême, 25 November 1980.
7. MODEF Constitution, Article Six.
8. This is treated in greater detail in ch. 8
9. Interview, Cognac, Charente, December 1980.
10. Rene Gondran, assistant general secretary. Rapport moral to National Conference, Montreuil 27-28 February 1982.
11. MODEF Constitution, Article Ten.



12. MODEF Constitution, Article Eighteen.
13. L'Exploitant Familial, March 1981, April 1981. See ch. 7 for a full account of the incident.
14. Interviews with Executive members of various political persuasions.
15. See ch. 7 for further details.
16. See Georges Lavau, A Quoi Sert le PCF? (Paris, Fayard, 1981), pp. 180-194. See also G. Molina and Y. Vargas, Dialogue à l'Interieur du PCF (Paris, Maspero, 1978)
17. Ch. 7 deals with the relations between the political tendencies within MODEF and MODEF's relations with the party system.
18. This concern with unity is reminiscent of the FNSEA of the 1950s. But this is hardly surprising when one considers that many of the founders of MODEF were activists in the FNSEA. The difference is that MODEF believes in the existence of a genuine common interest amongst a specific category of the agricultural population rather than a commonality of interest between all those who derive their income from agriculture. See also ch. 5 for MODEF's view of agriculture.
19. L'Exploitant Familial, March 1981.

20. See P. Grémion and J-P. Worms, Les Institutions Régionales et La Société locale (Paris, cnrs, 1969). B and J-L. Kayser, 95 Régions (Paris, Seuil, 1971). R. Dulong, L'Etat, les Régions et la Société Locale (Paris, Presses universitaires de France, 1978). For a case study of the weakness of the region see M. Bélanger, Le Pouvoir dans un Département Français. See particularly pp. 144-149 for the strains on the region created by the route of the A10 motorway.
21. H.H. Eckstein, Pressure Group Politics (London, Allen and Unwin, 1960), Introduction
22. Y. Tavernier, Le Syndicalisme Paysan: la FNSEA, Le CDJA (Paris, FNSP/A. Colin, 1969) pp. 35-37.
23. See H. Roussillon, L'Association Générale des Producteurs du Blé (Paris, A. Colin, 1970)
24. This belief in the unity of small and medium-scale agriculture helps to explain its hostility to the PS suggestions about changing price structures in order to favour previously underprivileged products at the expense of those which are well protected. MODEF called instead for all agricultural prices to be raised.
25. Tavernier, Le Syndicalisme Paysan, p. 23.
26. Le Monde, 2 March 1981.

27. Interview with the president of the Committee, Henriette Georges, Calvados, February 1981.
28. For example, amongst the leaders of the Charente Federation, their wives' occupations included teacher, doctor, pharmacist's assistant, secretary, etc.
29. Henriette Georges, interview, Calvados, February 1981.
30. Franck Marcade. Interview, Mont-de-Marsan, April 1981.
31. Andre Cantiran. Interview, Lubbon, Landes, April 1981.
32. Andre Cantiran. Interview, Lubbon, Landes, April 1981.
33. See J. Fontaine, Un Syndicat Paysan Contestataire: La FDSEA de la Mayenne (Rennes, Université de Rennes, thèse de doctorat de 3e cycle, 1977). This illustrates the pressures within the CNJA at this time which led to the emergence of the Paysan Travailleur group.
34. Interview, Angoulême, February 1981.
35. Interview with FNJ activists and leaders, 1980-1981.
36. Observations and conversations at the 1982 Conference with FNJ delegates.
37. La Charente Libre, 24 January 1981.

38. Les Informations Agricoles, 13 February 1981.
39. Les Informations Agricoles, 6 March 1981.
40. L'Exploitant Familial, April 1981. La Charente Libre, 25 March 1981.
41. La Marseillaise, 1 August 1981.
42. La Marseillaise, 11 August 1981.
43. La Marseillaise, 28 July 1981, 29 July 1981.
44. However, one MODEF activist in the Vaucluse took the opposite view. He claimed that the success of MODEF in the Vaucluse is due to the extreme diversity of production. This meant that someone, somewhere in the department would be up in arms at any given time. Interview, August 1981.
45. Interview with Frederic Lindenstaedt, Angouleme, 29 November 1980.
46. Interviews in Vaucluse and Bouches-du-Rhône, July-August 1981. The president of MODEF's wine committee, Emilien Soulié, gave his characteristically trenchant views to La Marseillaise, 21 August 1981.
47. R. Mineau, 'Paysans: de la Paix des Champs à la Réforme des Structures', La Nouvelle Critique, 50 (1972), 17-23

48. Interview with President of Alpes de Haute Provence MODEF Federation, Chateau-Arnoux, October 1981.
49. R. Mineau, 'Paysans: de la Paix des Champs à la Réforme des Structures', p. 18
50. L'Exploitant Familial, July 1978.
51. Interviews with MODEF activists, 1980-81.
52. See A. Baudoin and L-R. Dautriat, Alexis Gourvennec: Paysan Directeur Général (Paris, Fayard, 1977), p. 199. The strike was blocking the export of agricultural produce to England. The commando raid served no purpose since British dockers refused to unload the cargo.
53. R. Mineau, 'Paysans: de la Paix des Champs à la Réforme des Structures', p. 19
54. The BNIC decides the official price for cognacs and wines to be used in the manufacture of cognac, how much the merchants will buy and the time limits for payment. For further details see ch. 6.
55. Raymond Mangon, ex-president of the UDSEA de la Charente, (FNSEA), Angouleme, April 1981.
56. Of course, one of the main aims of the 1980 Loi d'Orientation was to overcome this situation by increasing concentration in agro-business.

57. See, for example, M. Crozier, The Bureaucratic Phenomenon, or its translation into plain French, A. Peyrefitte et al, Le Mal Français (Paris, Plon, 1976)
58. Only the Paysan Travailleur tendency treats co-operatives as if they were private firms. See any issue of Vent D'Ouest for their attitudes on co-operatives and co-operation.
59. Interviews with MODEF activists, 1980-1981.
60. Y. Daude, 'L'Agriculture De Chateaurenard', Revue de Geographie de Lyon, 47 (1972) 167-219. pp. 188-189 gives details of relationships between farmers and buyers. Confirmed by personal observations in July-August 1981.
61. See P. Boccara, Etudes sur Le Capitalisme Monopoliste D'Etat, sa Crise et son Issue (Paris, Editions Sociales, 1974) for the PCF version of the theory. For critiques, see the work of Poulantzas, particularly Political Power and Social Classes (London, New Left Books, 1975) pp. 271-2. See also J. Valier, Le PCF Et Le Capitalisme Monopoliste D'Etat (Paris, Maspèro, 1976)
62. Interview with MODEF official, Charente, March 1981.
63. L'Exploitant Familial, February 1982.
64. Interview, Vaucluse June 1981.
65. Interview with MODEF activists, 1980-1981.

66. See A. Tudesq, La France Des Notables (Paris, Seuil, 1973)
67. S. Tarrow, Peasant Communism in Southern Italy. J.D. Powell, 'Peasant Society and Clientelistic Politics', American Political Science Review, 104 (1970) 411-425. D. Bleitrach, J. Lojkine, E. Ouary, R. Delacroix and C. Mahieu, Social Démocratie et Classe Ouvrière: Lille et Marseille (Paris, Editions Sociales, 1981) J. Lagroye, Société et Politique à Bordeaux (Paris, Pedone, 1973)
68. Interviews with MODEF and FNSEA officials at Mont-de-Marsan, April 1981. This does not mean that the FNSEA actually succeeded, the significant point is that it tried where MODEF had given up the ghost.
69. Interview with FNSEA official, Mont-de-Marsan, April 1981.
70. Rene Gondran, Rapport moral, Montreuil Conference, 1982.
71. See Rudolf Heberle, Social Movements (New York, Apple-Century-Crofts, 1951) for one of the classic studies. See also B. McLaughlin (ed) Studies of Social Movements (New York, Free Press, 1969), J. Wilson, Introduction to Social Movements (New York, Basic Books, 1973) and P. Wilkinson, Social Movements (London, Pall Mall Press, 1971). All contain summaries of the literature.
72. R. Michels, Political Parties, p. 373. See R. Hyman, Marxism and the Sociology of Trade Unionism (London, Pluto, 1973), pp. 20-25.

73. R. Hyman, Industrial Relations: A Marxist Introduction (London, MacMillan, 1975), pp. 13-16.
74. R. Hyman and R.H. Fryer. 'Trade Unions: Sociology and Political Economy', in T. Clarke and L. Clements (eds) Trade Unions Under Capitalism. (London, Fontana, 1977) 152-174. See particularly p. 157.
75. L. Panitch, 'Recent Theorizations of Corporatism: Reflections on a Growth Industry', British Journal of Sociology, 31 (1980) 159-187. See also Hyman, Marxism and the Sociology of Trade Unionism pp. 25-37.
76. Hyman, Marxism and the Sociology of Trade Unionism, p. 29.
77. There is, of course, one great unstated aim, the role of MODEF as an agency of political socialization for the parties of the Left. This is dealt with fully in ch. 7. Suffice it to say that the evidence suggests this objective rarely conflicted with the formal objectives of MODEF before 1981.
78. Gondran, Rapport Moral, Montreuil Conference, 1982



References Chapter 5

1. H.M. Drucker, Doctrine and Ethos in the Labour Party, (London, Allen and Unwin, 1979) p. 1.
2. M. Seliger, Ideology and Politics, (London, Allen and Unwin, 1976) pp. 171-205
3. P. Ory, 'Le Dorgerisme: Institution et Discours d'une Colère Paysanne', Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine, 22 (1975), 168-190.
4. M. Arendt, On Totalitarianism, (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1973). G. Lukacs, History and Class Consciousness. J.P. Nettl, Rosa Luxemburg, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 339-340 where she defines the peasantry as "bourgeois by nature" - an odd phrase for a Marxist to use.
5. See N. Poulantzas, Political Power and Social Classes, pp. 195-224. See also N. Poulantzas, Les Classes Sociales Dans le Capitalisme Aujourd'hui, (Paris, Seuil, 1974), pp. 295-308, and E. Laclau, Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory, (London, Verso, 1979). G. Therborn, The Ideology of Power and the Power of Ideology, chs. 1 and 2, particularly pp. 22-26.
6. Therborn, The Ideology of Power and the Power of Ideology, p. 38.
7. The original promoters of this ideology would have been horrified by the word class.
8. M. Simmonet, L'Exploitant Familial, July 1961.

9. R. Mineau, L'Exploitant Familial, April 1965, February 1976.
10. Interview with L. Sicard, Noves, Bouches-du-Rhône, September 1981
11. Alfred Negre, L'Exploitant Familial, April 1974.
12. Gerard Caseneuve, L'Exploitant Familial, September 1971. Since the writer was one of the leaders of the FNJ and was later to become a member of the CERES tendency in the PS, this ideology cannot be regarded as a monopoly of ageing communists.
13. Interview with F. Lindenstaedt, Angoulême, 9 November 1980. My emphasis.
14. Interview with F. Lindenstaedt, Angoulême, 29 November 1980.
15. Interview with F. Lindenstaedt, Angoulême, 29 November 1980. This tends to confirm the suggestion made in the 1960s that the difference between working class and farm organizations was the former's concentration on the standard of living and the attachment of the latter to a particular life style. See J-L. Belliard, Les Problèmes Economiques et Sociaux Posés par les Implantations Industrielles en Milieux Rurux: L'Exemple de l'Aquitaine. (Paris, Gauthier-Villars, 1969), p. 226.
16. M. Simmonet, L'Exploitant Familial, July 1961. This is strongly reminiscent of the writings of one of the Charente's literary figures, the Vichyite novelist admired by Francois Mitterrand, Jacques Chardonne. Describing the situation before 1914, Chardonne

wrote: "En Charente, tout paysan est un seigneur". Le Bonheur De Barbezieux, (Paris, Stock, 1980), p. 10.

17. Interview with retired MODEF activist in the Vaucluse, June 1981.
18. F. Lindenstaedt. Unsigned article entitled 'Illusions Foncières et Realités' in L'Exploitant Familial, March 1981. This was also designed as a thinly-disguised polemic against the PS and is dealt with in ch. 7. See also the section on the SAFERS in ch. 6 for further examples of MODEF's attitude towards interference with private property.
19. Interview, Bouches-du-Rhône, October 1981.
20. Interview, Charente, April 1981.
21. Interview with Raymond Mangon, former president of the UDSEA of the Charente (FNSEA), Angoulême, April 1981. See also M. Gervais, 'Problèmes du Mouvement Professionnel' in Y. Tavernier, M. Gervais and C. Servolin, L'Univers Politique des Paysans dans la France Contemporaine, 367-378.
22. L'Exploitant Familial, January 1976.
23. Virtually every MODEF activist interviewed criticized the abolition of distillation rights. Many also contrasted the past and present with the former in the most favourable light.
24. Alfred Nègre, L'Exploitant Familial, January 1976. Jacques Dournois, L'Exploitant Familial, March 1961.

25. L'Exploitant Familial, September 1962.
26. L'Exploitant Familial, July 1965.
27. L'Exploitant Familial, January 1976. Also interview with A. Cantiran, vice president of MODEF and president of its tenant farmer section, Landes, April 1981.
28. R. Mineau, L'Exploitant Familial, April 1965.
29. L'Exploitant Familial, April 1967.
30. Interview, Vaucluse, August 1981.
31. Programme National du MODEF 1978.
32. L'Exploitant Familial, March 1977.
33. This distinction is similar to the CGT distinction between capital as an instrument of exploitation and as a necessary part of the work process.
34. Interviews, particularly Henriette Georges, MODEF vice president, Calvados, February 1981.
35. See L'Exploitant Familial, March 1964 for attitude to producer groups. See the issue of October 1961 for SAFERS and that of

November 1964 for reform of Ministry. The April 1969 issue deals with Senate reform whilst that of January 1967 addresses the question of the co-operatives. See also Programme National 1978. p. 20.

36. L'Exploitant Familial, October 1975.
37. For Charente Chamber of Agriculture debates, see 'Procès-Verbaux des Seances', 1976-1981. Kindly made available by M. J-P. Malgouyres, the Chamber's research officer.
38. F. Lindenstaedt, Interview, Angoulême, 29 November 1980.
39. Programme National 1978, p. 30.
40. Programme National 1978, p. 32. MODEF's views on the organizations are dealt with in greater depth in ch. 6
41. L'Exploitant Familial, September 1971. Interview with F. Lindenstaedt, Angoulême, 29 November 1980.
42. Interview, Vaucluse, June 1981.
43. Interview, Vaucluse, June 1981.
44. L'Exploitant Familial, May 1967.
45. L'Exploitant Familial, January 1969.

46. Lindenstaedt interview, Angoulême, 29 November 1980.
47. MODEF official, Bouches-du-Rhône. Quoted in La Marseillaise, 30 July 1981.
48. See La Marseillaise, 21 August 1981. Lindenstaedt interview, Angoulême, 29 November 1980. Emilien Soulié is the national vice-president responsible for wine.
49. Interviews and issues of L'Exploitant Familial during summer months of any year, though 1981 provided some spectacular examples. Indeed the whole Ampelos protest was justified in terms of securing the operation of safety clauses.
50. L'Exploitant Familial, June 1965.
51. L'Exploitant Familial, April 1977.
52. L'Exploitant Familial, September 1974 and January 1976. MODEF press release dated 1 April 1980.
53. La Marseillaise, 11 August 1981. This was the Ampelos affair.
54. Interview, Vaucluse, July 1981.
55. L'Exploitant Familial, May 1967.
56. See E. Le Roy Ladurie, H. Neveux and J. Jacquart, Histoire De La France Rurale. Vol 2 (Paris, Seuil, 1975).

57. K. Marx. Class Struggles in France, p. 123.
58. As the two longest serving Ministers of Agriculture since the Ministry's creation in 1881, their views are more than just representative. They had an important influence in the shaping and the servicing of this form of agrarianism. See P. Barral, Les Agrariens Français de Meline à Pisani, (Paris, A. Colin/FNSP, 1968), p. 169 for Ruau, p. 201 for Queuille.
59. M.A. Macchiochi. De La France. (Paris, Seuil, 1977), p. 72. Macchiochi uses the term to describe the activities of the French Left in general.
60. Y. Tavernier, M. Gervais and M. Jollivet. Histoire de La France Rurale, Vol 4. p. 552.
61. Particularly Richard Cobb, The Police and the People, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1972). See also Eugen Weber, Peasants into Frenchmen,
62. Quoted by Weber, Peasants into Frenchmen, p. 113. Ch. 7 of this work is a general discussion of the problem. It should be noted that Weber confuses the lack of French national consciousness and the existence of a regionalist or oppressed nationalist consciousness - i.e. passive ignorance is equated with active hostility to the nation.
63. See S. Elwitt, The Making of the Third Republic, (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1975), pp. 220-221.

64. M. Jollivet and H. Mendras, Les Collectivités Rurales Francaises, Vol I. (Paris, A. Colin, 1971), pp. 198-199
65. Two recent articles put this case. J.E. Davis, 'Capitalist Agricultural Development and the Exploitation of the Propertied Labourer', in F. Buttel and H. Newby (eds), The Rural Sociology of Advanced Societies, (London, Croom Helm, 1980), 133-154. Davis demonstrates convincingly how agriculture is subordinated to industry but then makes the mistaken assumption that the relation of agriculture to the wider economy determines the class status of farmers. See also A. De Janvry, 'Social Differentiation in Agriculture and the Ideology of Neo-Populism' in the same volume, 155-170. This puts a similar case in a much cruder fashion.
66. Interview, Vaucluse, June 1981.
67. K. Kautsky, 'Summary of Selected Parts of the Agrarian Question' in Buttel and Newby (eds), The Rural Sociology of Advanced Societies, 39-82
68. See P. Gratton, Les Luittes de Classes dans les Campagnes, ch.1. Also C. Landauer, 'The Guesdists and the Small Farmer'.
69. F. Hearn, 'Remembrance and Critique: The Uses of The Past for Discrediting the Present and Anticipating the Future', Politics and Society, 5 (1975), 201-228. Quote from p. 201.



70. It is no accident, therefore, that those less attached to property have emerged from the least materialist camps. The case of former MRP deputy and Paysan Travailleur leader, Bernard Lambert, is a classic example. It also accounts for PT hostility to clientelism.
71. See, for example, A. Bonnet, 'Un Nouveau Groupe de Pression: Le CID-UNATI', Revue Politique et Parlementaire, 843 (1973), pp. 46-61. See also C. Baudelot, R. Estabiet and J. Malemort, La Petite Bourgeoisie en France, (Paris, Maspéro, 1974), p. 257.
72. This has been described by M. Olson, The Logic of Collective Action, (Cambridge, Ma. Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 11. This does not imply an endorsement of Olson's simplistic assumptions about the relevance of neo-classical economics and marginal utility theory as explanations of political behaviour. Olson fails to recognize that the kinds of behaviour he describes depend on the presence of ideologies legitimizing such practices.
73. L'Exploitant Familial, February 1966.
74. E. Gellner, Thought and Change, (London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1972), pp. 147-178 where the question is considered. For an application of this theory to the absence of nationalism, see D.W. Miller, Queen's Rebels: Ulster Loyalism in Historical Perspective, (Dublin, Gill and MacMillan, 1978)
75. Y. Tavernier, 'Le MODEF' in Y. Tavernier, M. Gervais and C. Servolin, L'Univers Politique des Paysans dans la France Contemporaine, 467-496

76. P. Muller, 'Comment les Idées Deviennent-elles Politiques: La Naissance d'une Nouvelle Ideologie Paysanne en France 1945-65', Revue Française de Science Politique, 32 (1982), 90-108.
77. Committee report published by MODEF in February 1982.
78. See M. Seliger, Ideology and Politics, pp. 233-234.


# References Chapter 6

1. J.T.S. Keeler, 'The Corporatist Dynamic of Agricultural Modernization in the Fifth Republic', in S. Hoffmann and W.G. Andrews, The Fifth Republic at Twenty (Albany, State University of New York Press, 1981), 271-289.
2. Keeler, 'The Corporatist Dynamic of Agricultural Modernization in the Fifth Republic', p. 271
3. L'Exploitant Familial, June 1970.
4. L'Exploitant Familial, July 1972.
5. L'Exploitant Familial, March 1972.
6. L'Exploitant Familial, April 1965.
7. L'Exploitant Familial, November and October 1976. Interview with Frederic Lindenstaedt, Angoulême, 29 November 1980.
8. L'Exploitant Familial, April 1961.
9. Michel Debatisse, Objectifs et Moyens d'Action du Syndicalisme, Report to 25th FNSEA Congrès Fédéral, Nîmes, February 1971, pp. 19-37.
10. Debatisse, Objectifs et Moyens d'Action du Syndicalisme, p. 37.
11. Raymond Mangon, Interview, Angoulême, April 1981.

12. Michel Bélanger, Le Pouvoir Dans Un Département Français, pp. 57-60.
13. R. Mangon, Interview, Angoulême, April 1981.
14. Interview with Vaucluse FDSEA full time official, Avignon, July 1981.
15. Mangon, Interview, Angoulême, April 1981.
16. Mangon, Interview, Angoulême, April 1981.
17. Mangon, Interview, Angoulême, April 1981.
18. Interview with M. Argouach, directeur des services, FDSEA Landes, Mont-de-Marsan, April 1981.
19. Lindenstaedt, Interview, Angoulême, 29 November 1980.
20. Lindenstaedt, Interview, Angouleme, 29 November 1980.
21. Lambert, Les Paysans Dans La Lutte De Classes, p. 28.
22. L'Exploitant Familial, March 1965.
23. L'Exploitant Familial, April 1960
24. L'Exploitant Familial, September 1960, March 1961.
25. L'Exploitant Familial, March 1972.

26. L'Exploitant Familial, March 1972
27. L'Exploitant Familial, February 1981.
28. L'Exploitant Familial, June 1961.
29. Raymond Mineau, interview, Angoulême, November 1980.
30. L'Exploitant Familial, November 1964.
31. L'Exploitant Familial, May 1968.
32. L'Exploitant Familial, August 1975.
33. L'Exploitant Familial, August 1976.
34. La Marseillaise, 2 August 1966.
35. La Marseillaise, 13 August 1966. According to MODEF, "La FDSEA a laissé la liberté à ses adhérents de participer à la manifestation". See La Marseillaise, 14 August 1966.
36. Interview with MODEF activists, Vaucluse, May-November 1981.
37. La Charente Libre, 21 November 1980, 11 December 1980. Mineau report to Charente Federation Executive, December 1980. Situation Générale de l'Agriculture Charentaise, Dated 20 November 1980.
38. For the Parliamentary defeat, La Charente Libre, 18 and 19 December 1980. For Mineau's remarks, see La Charente Libre, 19 December 1980.

39. La Charente Libre, 16 January 1981, 21 January 1981.
40. La Charente Libre, 24 January 1981.
41. La Charente Libre, 29 and 30 January 1981.
42. La Charente Libre, 6 February 1981.
43. La Charente Libre, 30 March 1981, Headline from 19 December 1980.
44. J. Fontaine, Un Syndicat Paysan Contestataire, pp. 343-344.
45. L'Exploitant Familial, October 1962.
46. See FNJ-MODEF training document entitled La Néccesité et les Possibilités de la Lutte Revendicative Paysanne, 1978 which denounces the CNJA and the FNSEA as "le syndicalisme de collaboration".
47. Interviews with MODEF officials in various departments 1980-1981.
48. Interview with Guy Berthomier, FNJ general secretary, Angoulême, 19 December 1980. This took place before his resignation.
49. See Vent D'Ouest, the Paysan Travailleur journal, December 1980. See also 'Compte Rendu de la Réunion 'Lait' Grand Ouest', 19 December 1980.
50. Vent D'Ouest, December 1979.

51. Interview with PT official, Nantes, February 1981.
  52. L'Exploitant Familial, August 1970.
  53. Lindenstaedt, Interview, Angoulême, 29 November 1980.
  54. Interview with Côtes du Nord MODEF official, St. Mayeux, February 1981.
  55. Federation Française de l'Agriculture leaflet distributed at the Salon de l'Agriculture, March 1981.
  56. L'Exploitant Familial, January 1972.
  57. Lindenstaedt, Interview, Angoulême, 29 November 1980
  58. Not only does the FNSEA have to face electoral competition from MODEF, it has also to come to some arrangement with other groups such as farm owners or Credit Agricole representatives, etc.
  59. Cour Des Comptes, 'Rapport au President de la République', 1971.  
L'Exploitant Familial, September 1971.
  60. Cour des Comptes, 'Rapport au President de la République', 1979.
  61. L'Exploitant Familial, October 1969.
  62. L'Exploitant Familial, October 1969
  63. L'Exploitant Familial, July 1965.
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64. See 'Procès-Verbaux des Séances', Chambre d'Agriculture des Landes, 1964-1979. Also interviews with MODEF and FDSEA officials, Mont-de-Marsan, April 1981.
65. Chambre d'Agriculture de la Charente, 'Procès-Verbaux des Séances', 1964-1979.
66. Chambre d'Agriculture de la Charente, 'Procès-Verbaux des Séances', 20 May 1965.
67. Chambre d'Agriculture de la Charente, 'Procès-Verbaux des Séances', 2 June 1969.
68. Chambre d'Agriculture de la Charente, 'Procès-Verbaux des Séances', 28 June 1979.
69. Chambre d'Agriculture de la Charente, 'Procès-Verbaux des Séances', 15 February 1980.
70. Chambre d'Agriculture de la Charente, 'Procès-Verbaux des Séances', 28 June 1979 for MODEF criticisms of accounts. See 15 March 1979 for MODEF elimination from the worthwhile positions. For MODEF's post-1979 responsibilities within the Chamber, see Chambre d'Agriculture de la Charente - Rôle et Fonctionnement. (Chambre d'Agriculture de la Charente, Angoulême, 1980)
71. Interviews with MODEF representatives in the Chamber, November 1980-April 1981.



72. See S. Sokoloff, 'Rural Change and Farming Politics: A Terminal Peasantry', p. 226.
73. J-C Gaudibert, Le Dernier Empire Français: Le Credit Agricole, (Paris, Séghors, 1977) p. 11.
74. However, Gaudibert and M. Laligant, L'Intervention de l'Etat dans le Secteur Agricole, argue the opposite case. See Gaudibert, Le Dernier Empire Français, p. 188 and Laligant, p. 336.
75. Sokoloff, 'Rural Change and Farming Politics: A Terminal Peasantry', p. 226.
76. Lindenstaedt, Interview, Angoulême, 29 November 1980
77. Gaudibert, Le Dernier Empire Français, p. 165.
78. Credit Agricole, Annual Reports, particularly 1980.
79. P. Ardhen, 'Quelle Cooperation', Economie et Humanisme, 211 (1973), 21-25 who makes a distinction between the capitalist and artisanal sectors of co-operation.
80. See C. Canavet, La Cooperation Agricole En Bretagne, (St. Brieuc, Presses universitaires de Bretagne, 1972), p. 21 for details of links between private entreprise and co-operatives. See also Ardhen, 'Quelle Cooperation'. See P. Langevin, L'Economie Provencale, p. 164.

81. Sokoloff, 'Rural Change and Farming Politics: A Terminal Peasantry', p. 229. S. Berger, Peasants Against Politics, p. 222.
82. Canavet, La Cooperation Agricole en Bretagne, p. 58.
83. For the influence on co-operatives of the SICA's, see Canavet, La Cooperation Agricole en Bretagne, p. 18-21. For Credit Agricole influence over the co-operatives, see Sokoloff, 'Rural Change and Farming Politics: A Terminal Peasantry', p. 226.
84. L'Exploitant Familial, January 1967.
85. MODEF Programme National 1978, p. 21.
86. MODEF Programme National 1978. Though large by wine standards, it does not compare with the dairy giants. Production co-operatives are excluded from this analysis since they do not have the same political significance as the marketing co-operatives, being much smaller organizations.

Briefly, there are two types of production co-operative. There is the strictly defined Groupement Agricole d'Exploitation en Commun (GAEC) in which the farmers involved operate their farms as a single legal and economic unit. The other is the Cooperative d'Utilisation du Matériel Agricole, the CUMA, where a group of farmers combine for the purchase of machinery.

Though MODEF has no ideological objections against the GAECs, very few of its activists were to be found in them. This was mainly due to the legal complexity and the inflexibility of the GAEC. On the other hand, many participated in a de facto GAEC between father and son, between brothers, etc. In other words, production co-operatives existed in economic terms, if not in legal ones.

The CUMA is, on the other hand, one of MODEF's favourite institutions. MODEF encouraged its members to set up and join them in order to reduce the burden of investment and to benefit from the financial concessions available to CUMA members, advice which was acted upon. MODEF was also represented in the national leadership of the Federation Nationale des Cooperatives d'Utilisation du Matériel Agricole (FNCUMA). However, it is possible to argue that this willingness to co-operate was as much a symptom of conservatism as of radicalism since this type of co-operation corresponds to the ancient tradition of mutual aid.

87. Interview with F. Poussard, MODEF Charente. Conseiller général for Cognac Sud 1976-82. April 1981. At the time, he was also a member of the board of Cognac hospital.
88. See La Marseillaise, 30 July 1981.
89. Interviews with MODEF and FDSEA officials in the Landes, Mont-de-Marsan, April 1981.

90. The role of the SAFERS is described in La Documentation Française, Les SAFERS et l'Amenagement Foncier. (Paris, Notes et Etudes Documentaires, 1967)
91. See Bulletin D'Information du Ministère de l'Agriculture, No 804, 27 February 1978, p. 9.
92. Bulletin D'Information du Ministère de l'Agriculture, No 804, 27 February 1978, p. 13.
93. L'Exploitant Familial, June 1960.
94. L'Exploitant Familial, October 1961.
95. L'Exploitant Familial, June 1963.
96. L'Exploitant Familial, February 1973.
97. Bulletin D'Information du Ministère de l'Agriculture, No 804, 27 February 1978, p. 13.
98. See J. Bonneau, 'Le Contrôle des Rétrocessions des SAFERS', Revue des Sociétés, 97 (1979), 495-504.
99. L'Exploitant Familial, September 1976.
100. La Charente Agricole/MODEF Poitou Charentes, 15 April 1979.

101. L'Exploitant Familial, (Vaucluse edition), February 1978.

102. MODEF Programme National 1978, pp. 17-19.

# References Chapter 7

1. See ch. 8 for further details of this view of MODEF.
2. Programme National du MODEF, 1978, p. 32.
3. See C. Servolin and Y. Tavernier, 'La France', in H. Mendras and Y. Tavernier (eds) Terre, Paysans et Politiques, (Paris, SEDEIS, 1969), 143-219, especially p. 186
4. See Tavernier et al, Histoire de la France Rurale, Vol 4, p. 497
5. A. Bastardie, 'Le Syndicalisme Paysan en Corrèze depuis 1945' (Paris, Institut d'Etudes Politiques, mémoire, 1971), p. 64. See also J. Robin, 'Nouvelles Lutttes Paysannes', Critiques de l'Economie Politique, 21 (1976), 18-34
6. M. Bodiguel, Les Paysans Face au Progrès, quoted by Servolin and Tavernier, 'La France', p. 152
7. S. Tarrow, 'The Urban-Rural Cleavage in Political Involvement: The Case of France', American Political Science Review, 65 (1971), 341-357.
8. J-J Becker, Le Parti Communiste Veut-il Prendre le Pouvoir, (Paris, Seuil, 1981), p. 17
9. P.Gaborit, 'Le PCF et Les Paysans' in Tavernier et al, L'Univers Politique des Paysans dans la France Contemporaine, 197-222. See particularly p. 219 where he points out that this is highly

doubtful.

10. J. Tepicht, Marxisme et Agriculture, (Paris, A. Colin, 1973), p. 23
11. S. O'Faolain, The Irish, (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1980), p. 100.
12. Baudoin and Dautriat, Alexis Gourvennec: Paysan-Directeur Général, p. 32
13. See ch. 4 for the nature of local MODEF branches.
14. Y. Tavernier, 'Action Syndicale et Comportement Politique des Paysans', Economie Rurale, 79-80 (1969), 45-58.
15. Tavernier, 'Action Syndicale et Comportement Politique des Paysans', p. 50
16. Clavaud and Marchais, Les Communistes et les Paysans. See also A. Lajoinie, F. Clavaud, J. Flavien and L. Perceval, Quelle Agriculture Pour La France, (Paris, Editions Sociales, 1974). Lajoinie is the party leader responsible for agriculture.

For the PS, see 'L'Agriculture et Ses Travailleurs', supplement to Terre et Travail, no.34, January 1980. Although no one except Jean-Pierre Chevenement took the Projet Socialiste as a serious statement of what the PS would do in government, the agricultural chapter (which is what this document is) is different. In the first place, it corresponded more or less to Mitterrand's own campaign promises. See F. Mitterrand, Ici Et Maintenant, (Paris, Fayard, 1980), pp. 140-144. More importantly, this document reflected both the work of the party's agricultural experts and was

reflected in the policies of the first socialist Agriculture Minister, Edith Cresson. For these reasons, the document can be taken as an authoritative and representative statement of PS ideas on agriculture.

17. Lajoinie et al, Quelle Agriculture pour la France, p. 29
18. Mitterrand, Ici et Maintenant, pp. 183-185
19. M. Charzat, Le Syndrôme de la Gauche, (Paris, Grasset, 1982) pp. 79-80
20. Charzat, Le Syndrôme de la Gauche, p. 84
21. MODEF Programme National 1978. p. 3
22. Lajoinie et al, Quelle Agriculture pour la France, pp. 90-91.
23. PS, 'L'Agriculture et ses Travailleurs'
24. PS, 'L'Agriculture et ses Travailleurs', p. 1.
25. Marchais and Clavaud, Les Communistes et Les Paysans, pp. 40-41.
26. Lajoinie et al, Quelle Agriculture pour la France, p. 109.
27. PS, 'L'Agriculture et ses Travailleurs', p. 9.
28. MODEF, Programme National 1978, p. 29.



29. PS, 'L'Agriculture et ses Travailleurs' p. 11.
30. Charzat, Le Syndrome de la Gauche, p. 246.
31. MODEF, Programme National 1978, p. 3.
32. Lajoinie et al, Quelle Agriculture pour la France, p. 120.
33. PS, 'L'Agriculture et ses Travailleurs', p. 1.
34. Lajoinie et al, Quelle Agriculture pour la France, p. 37.
35. J. Chesneaux, Le PCF: Un Art de Vivre, (Paris, M. Nadeau/Les Lettres Nouvelles, 1980), p. 13. See also pp. 21-22.
36. PS, 'L'Agriculture et ses Travailleurs', p. 3. MODEF, Programme National 1978, p. 3.
37. PS, 'L'Agriculture et ses Travailleurs', p. 9.
38. MODEF, Programme National 1978, p. 25.
39. See Marchais and Clavaud, Les Communistes et les Paysans, pp. 17-19, and Lajoinie et al, Quelle Agriculture pour la France, p. 100.
40. Lajoinie et al, Quelle Agriculture pour la France, p. 133.
41. PS, 'L'Agriculture et ses Travailleurs', p. 22. MODEF interviews. For the division in MODEF see ch. 5

42. PS, 'L'Agriculture et ses Travailleurs', p. 18.
43. See L'Exploitant Familial, April 1981. Unsigned article by F. Lindenstaedt entitled "Illusions Foncières et Realités".
44. In this particular case, one should remember the strained relationship between the PS and the PCF and the obvious political motives of the general secretary. This is discussed in greater detail below.
45. See G. Lavau, A Quoi Sert Le PCF?, pp. 342-346.
46. G. Lavau in O. Duhamel and H. Weber, Changer le PC?, (Paris, Presses universitaires de France, 1979), p. 207.
47. Lindenstaedt, Interview, Angoulême, November 1980.
48. Mitterrand, Ici et Maintenant, p. 123.
49. See Andre Barjonet, La CGT, (Paris, Seuil, 1968), pp. 95-97.
50. G. Sabatier. Interview, Bollène, August 1981.
51. See G. Elgey, La République des Illusions, (Paris, Fayard, 1965), pp. 281-282.
52. Rene Gondran, rapport moral, 1982 Conference, Montreuil.
53. Interviews with various socialists in MODEF, 1980-81.

54. L'Exploitant Familial, October 1960, February 1981.
55. Interviews with officials from various departments.
56. L'Exploitant Familial, December 1960.
57. L'Exploitant Familial, December 1962.
58. L'Exploitant Familial, October 1965.
59. L'Exploitant Familial, November 1965.
60. L'Exploitant Familial, December 1965.
61. Y. Tavernier, 'Le Syndicalisme Paysan et la Ve République', Revue Française de Science Politique, 16 (1966), 869-912.
62. L'Exploitant Familial, June 1968.
63. L'Exploitant Familial, April 1969.
64. L'Exploitant Familial, June 1969.
65. L'Exploitant Familial, April 1972.
66. L'Exploitant Familial, February 1973.
67. L'Exploitant Familial, May 1974.

68. L'Exploitant Familial, February 1978.
69. L'Exploitant Familial, February 1981.
70. L'Exploitant Familial, February 1978.
71. L'Exploitant Familial, February 1981. Article in name of "La Direction Nationale".
72. L'Exploitant Familial, March and April 1981. Articles entitled "Le Billet de Secretaire General". These articles do not necessarily have to be approved by the rest of the leadership.
73. D. Lacorne, Les Notables Rouges, (Paris, FNSP, 1980), p. 147. See also D. Lacorne, 'Left-Wing Unity at the Grass Roots: Picardy and Languedoc' in S. Tarrow and D. Blackmore (eds), Communism in Italy and France, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1975), 305-339.
74. Interviews with MODEF members, Vaucluse, May-November 1981.
75. Though there appears to have been some hostility to Lindenstaedt's election as assistant general secretary in 1973 and some suspicion about the political motives behind his election, he quickly overcame this initial hostility through a mixture of charm and competence. His election as general secretary in 1978 should not be seen as a deliberate political move. Firstly, Mineau could not have been removed unless he wanted to retire from the position. Secondly, Lindenstaedt was the obvious choice for the succession since no-one else was both willing and experienced enough for the

job. Finally, the differences in style have not prevented Mineau and Lindenstaedt from working closely together.

76. L'Exploitant Familial, October 1977.
77. Lindenstaedt, L'Exploitant Familial, April 1981.
78. Lindenstaedt, L'Exploitant Familial, April 1981.
79. L'Exploitant Familial, March 1981.
80. L'Exploitant Familial, March 1981.
81. L'Exploitant Familial, July 1972.
82. Mitterrand, Ici et Maintenant, p. 132.
83. Interview Spring 1981.
84. Interviews with MODEF socialists in various departments 1981.
85. Interviews with Charente MODEF leaders, November 1980 - April 1981.
86. Pierre Ingrand, Mareuil, Charente, March 1981. This distinction is reminiscent of the Poujadist distinction between "faire de la politique et faire du politique". See S. Hoffmann, Le Mouvement Poujade, p. 99. But there is a significant difference between the two positions. The MODEF attitude is devoid of moralizing about the corruption and dishonesty of politics. It is also one aspect of

the Poujadist experience from which MODEF had learnt a lesson. By violating this precept, Poujade ruined his organization. The electoral victory of 1956 was, in effect, the death-knell of Poujade's career, not its most successful point. Hoffmann points out that the Charente Poujadists were one of the leading centres of dissidence, objecting to the presentation of candidates in the 1956 elections. See pp. 125-129.

87. Interviews, Charente, November 1980-April 1981.
88. Interview, Charente, 3 April 1981.
89. Various interviews. November 1980-November 1981.
90. Interview, Hiersac, 9 April 1981.
91. See L'Exploitant Familial where such meetings are described from time to time.
92. L'Exploitant Familial, August 1969.
93. L'Exploitant Familial, October 1974.
94. L'Exploitant Familial, May 1969.
95. See Terre et Travail. Also PS, 'L'Agriculture et ses Travailleurs'. Mitterrand, Ici Et Maintenant, p. 144.
96. See, for example, a scarcely veiled attack on Rocard in P. Guidoni,

La Cité Rouge: Le Socialisme à Narbonne, (Toulouse, Privat, 1979), p. 145.

97. For the 2nd International's hostile attitudes as expressed by R. Luxemburg, see J.P. Nettl, Rosa Luxemburg, pp. 339-340. For early French socialism, C. Landauer, 'The Guesdists and the Small Farmer: The Early Erosion of French Marxism'.
98. See Bleitrach et al, Classe Ouvrière et Social Démocratie: Lille Et Marseille, (Paris, Editions Sociales, 1981)
99. For statements of the problem see P. Viveret and L. Rosanvallon, Pour une Nouvelle Culture Politique, (Paris, Seuil, 1976). See also the conclusion of H. Portelli, Le Socialisme Français Tel Qu'Il Est, (Paris, Presses universitaires de France, 1980).
100. La Marseillaise, 12 February 1976.
101. R. Jonis, 'Le Gard: L'Influence et l'Action des Communistes', Cahiers du Communisme, 5 (1973), 70-85.
102. M. Rocard, Preface to Lambert, Les Paysans dans la Lutte des Classes, p. 16.
103. See Cahiers du Communisme, 4 (1978) p. 35.
104. See Walter, Histoire Des Paysans De France, p. 451. See also the contribution of F.G. Dreyfus in A. Mabileau (ed), Les Facteurs Locaux de la Vie Politique Nationale, (Paris, Pedone, 1972), p. 68.

105. See Gaborit, 'Le PCF Et Les Paysans', p. 197.
106. Rocard, Preface to Lambert, Les Paysans dans la Lutte des Classes, p. 16.
107. See Chesneaux, Le PCF: Un Art De Vivre, for the emphasis on the defence of particular interests. See also contributors to Duhamel and Weber, Changer Le PC? See also G. Lavau, 'The PCF, State and Revolution: The Analysis of Party Policies, Communications and Popular Culture', in Tarrow and Blackmer (eds), Communism in Italy and France, 87-142. See particularly p. 101.
108. R. Tiersky in Duhamel and Weber, Changer le PC?, p. 226. See also J-M Vincent, 'The PCF', New Left Review, 52 (1968), 25-51.
109. L. Althusser, 'What Must Change in the Party', New Left Review, 109 (1978), 19-45.
110. Chesneaux, Le PCF: Un Art de Vivre, p. 42.
111. J. Rony, Trente Ans de Parti: Un Communiste S'interroge, (Paris, Christian Bourgeois, 1978), pp. 180-181, deals with the hostility of many party members to the idea of "union du Peuple de France" and the class collaboration which it implied.
112. La Charente Agricole, April 1959.
113. D. Lacorne, Les Notables Rouges, pp. 83-84.



114. This was confirmed by interviews with various MODEF leaders who held political offices.
115. This problem also affects the parties when they win control of local councils. Its leaders are drawn into administration and the party claim on time and effort is subordinated to that of the council. This is a constant complaint of PCF activists. See also Lacorne, Les Notables Rouges, who discusses this problem, p. 92. See also the contribution of G. Molina and Y. Vargas in Duhamel and Weber, Changer le PC?, p.113.
116. Interview, Apt, 25 September 1981.
117. See Chesneaux, Le PCF: Un Art de Vivre. See also I Barbadoro, 'Les Luites Paysannes en France et Leur Limites', Les Temps Modernes, 18 (1963) 1216-1244.
118. This is as opposed to the relation between the PCF and its supporters as part of the organized working class.
119. G. Ansart, De l'Usine A L'Assemblée Nationale, p. 98. Quoted by Chesneaux, Le PCF: Un Art de Vivre, p. 46. See also F. Dupuy, Etre Maire Communiste, (Paris, Editions Sociales, 1975) for a similar clientelistic vision of politics.
120. For the CGT, see G. Lavau, A Quoi Sert Le PCF?, p. 129.
121. On this point, see G. Ross, 'Party and Mass Organization: The Changing Relationship of the PCF and the CGT', in Tarrow and

Blackmer (eds), Communism in Italy and France, 504-540. See particularly p. 525.

# References Chapter 8

1. See, for example, M. Jollivet, 'Sociétés Rurales et Classes Sociales' in Tavernier et al, L'Univers Politique des Paysans dans la France Contemporaine, 79-108, p.102. See also Tarrow, The Urban-Rural Cleavage in Political Involvement: The Case of France, p. 341

See also Agulhon, Lé République au Village. Judt, Socialism in Provence. Tilly, La Vendée, particularly ch. 12.

2. See L'Exploitant Familial, July 1965.
3. L'Exploitant Familial, August 1969.
4. L'Exploitant Familial, August 1972.
5. L'Exploitant Familial, May 1975.
6. However, it is only fair to point out that if Chamber of Agriculture elections were governed by the same rules which apply to Comité d'Entreprise elections, MODEF would not have even been able to present candidates.
7. See P. Grémion, Le Pouvoir Périphérique, p. 155. See also Grémion and Worms, Les Institutions Régionales et la Société Locale, p. 3.

8. J. Chevallier, 'Un Nouveau Sens de l'Etat et du Service Public', in F. de Baecque and J-L Quermonne (eds), Administration et Politique sous la Cinquieme République, (Paris, FNSP, 1981), 163-204, p. 183.
9. Chevallier, 'Un Nouveau Sens de l'Etat et du Service Public', pp. 195-196.
10. Peyrefitte, Le Mal Français, p. 250
11. Crozier, The Bureaucratic Phenomenon, pp. 218-222.
12. Chevallier, 'Un Nouveau Sens de l'Etat et du Service Public', p. 201.
13. S. Cohen, Modern Capitalist Planning: The French Model, (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969), p. 197-8. See also M.M. Watson, 'The Character and Contradictions of Western Style Planning', in R.T. Griffiths (ed) Government, Business and Labour in European Capitalism, (London, Europotentials Press, 1977), 32-59 See particularly pp. 44-45. See also W.F. Averyt, Agro-Politics in the European Community, (New York, Praeger, 1977), for the argument that participation in decision-making requires expertise which most farmers do not have. "National farm policy in France or Germany is complex enough, but EEC farm policy is so Byzantine that only farmers with large amount of resources, especially time, knowledge and wealth, are able to understand the decision-making process sufficiently to be able to influence the output... COPA leaders thus represent an elite of elites." p. 75.

COPA is the Comité des Organisations Professionnelles Agricoles which represents the major European farm unions in EEC-related matters.

14. Chevallier, 'Un Nouveau Sens de l'Etat et du Service Public', p. 201.
15. See Poulantzas, Political Power and Social Classes. Also C. Offe, 'The Theory of the Capitalist State and the Problem of Policy Formation' in L. Lindberg and R. Alford (eds), Stress and Contradiction in Modern Capitalism, (Lexington, Lexington Books, 1975), 125-144
16. R. Miliband, The State in Capitalist Society, (London, Quartet, 1973). See also P. Birnbaum, Les Sommets de l'Etat, (Paris, Seuil, 1977). For the concept of the autonomy of the political, see Poulantzas, Political Power and Social Classes, p. 29.
17. Le Monde, 11 June 1981.
18. Le Monde, 2 February 1981.
19. See L'Exploitant Familial, March 1969. See also Démocratie Moderne, 16 January 1969. This also encouraged the belief that Doumeng was the real leader of MODEF when, in fact, he had not played any active role in MODEF since 1962.
20. Interview, Apt, 25 September, 1981.

21. Interview, R. Mineau, Angoulême, November 1980.
22. Conversation with DDA official, Angoulême, 9 March 1981.
23. See ch. 4
24. See L'Exploitant Familial, September 1976, October 1976.
25. It is also necessary to point out that the UDSEA of the Charente is not happy with the way in which its own representatives are nominated. Interview R. Mangon, ex-president UDSEA, Angoulême, 20 April 1981. "On n'est pas d'accord avec la représentation telle qu'elle est. Les gens y sont presque plus à titre individuel alors qu'ils y devaient être davantage en tant que représentants des viticulteurs. Le fonctionnement du BNIC ne nous paraît pas satisfaisant."
26. L'Exploitant Familial, May 1966.
27. Interview, St. Mayeux, Côtes-Du-Nord, 18 February 1981.
28. See L'Exploitant Familial, February 1981.
29. MODEF Charente-Poitou, La Charente Agricole, 1 November 1978.
30. Conversation with R. Mineau, Angoulême, 1981.
31. Poulantzas, Political Power and Social Classes, p. 115.

32. E. Pisani, Socialiste de Raison, (Paris, Flammarion/La Rose au Poing, 1978), p. 10
33. J.F. Medard, 'Political Clientelism in France: The Center-Periphery Nexus Reexamined', in R. Lemarchand and S. Eisenstadt, Political Clientelism, Patronage and Development, (London, Sage, 1981), 125-172, particularly p. 138 and p. 169.
34. Chevallier, 'Un Nouveau Sens de l'Etat et du Service Public', pp. 183-5 and p. 201.
35. See Berger, Peasants Against Politics, p. 145. See F. Brun, Les Français d'Algérie dans l'Agriculture du Midi Méditerranéen, (Gap, Ophrys, 1976), p. 146.
37. See Tavernier, 'Le Syndicalisme Paysan et la Politique Agricole du Gouvernement', p. 622.
38. Grémion and Worms, Les Institutions Régionales et la Société Locale, p. 210.
39. Grémion and Worms, Les Institutions Régionales et la Société Locale, p. 248.
40. See Tavernier, 'Une Nouvelle Administration pour l'Agriculture: La Réforme du Ministère', p. 901.
41. L'Exploitant Familial, December 1961.

42. L'Exploitant Familial, July 1961.
43. L'Exploitant Familial, September 1962.
44. L'Exploitant Familial, September 1962.
45. L'Exploitant Familial, September 1962.
46. L'Exploitant Familial, July 1962.
47. L'Exploitant Familial, November 1964.
48. Le Monde, 15 March 1968. Article by P. Viansson-Ponte, 'Quand la France S'ennuie'.
49. See J.F. Medard, 'Political Clientelism in France' who quotes Robert Buron. "L'activité première du parlementaire n'a que des rapports très lointains avec la politique proprement dite. L'élu est d'abord, et avant tout, un avocat rémunéré au salaire mensuel, un interprète, un démarcheur indéfatigable. C'est aussi une assistante sociale... la plus efficace de son département." Le Plus Beau des Metiers, p.32, quoted by Medard, p. 165.
50. L'Exploitant Familial, March 1967.
51. L'Exploitant Familial, March 1967
52. Lindenstaedt, interview, Angoulême, 29 November 1980.



53. See L'Exploitant Familial, May 1967.
54. See L'Exploitant Familial, April 1969.
55. L'Exploitant Familial, November 1972.
56. L'Exploitant Familial, July 1972.
57. This policy is, of course, hindered somewhat by the fact that many MODEF activists are too busy campaigning as members of political parties to follow this advice.
58. L'Exploitant Familial, July 1970. The bill was eventually withdrawn after pressure on the government from some of its own supporters.
59. L'Exploitant Familial, July 1978.
60. L'Exploitant Familial, February 1981. Conversations with some of those involved.
61. L'Exploitant Familial, November 1977.
62. As in Angoulême in 1978 and Tarascon in 1981.
63. A particularly vivid and symbolic example is the fact that MODEF headquarters and the RG offices in Mont-de-Marsan are ten yards apart.

64. L'Exploitant Familial, January 1969.
65. Grémion and Worms, Les Institutions Régionales et la Société Locale, p. 249
66. Grémion and Worms, Les Institutions Régionales et la Société Locale, pp. 203-210.
67. Grémion and Worms, Les Institutions Régionales et la Société Locale, p. 248. See also V. Wright, 'Regionalization under the French Fifth Republic', in L.J. Sharpe (ed) Decentralist Trends in Western Democracies, (London, Sage, 1979), 193-234, p. 212.
68. See P. Gourevitch, 'Reforming the Napoleonic State: The Creation of Regional Governments in France and Italy', in S. Tarrow, P. Katzenstein, and L. Graziano (eds), Territorial Politics in Industrial Nations, (New York, Praeger, 1978), 28-63, p. 42.
69. L'Exploitant Familial, April 1969.
70. S. Tarrow, 'Regional Policy, Ideology and Peripheral Defense: The Case of Fos-Sur-Mer', in Tarrow et al (eds) Territorial Politics in Industrial Nations, 97-122, p. 98
71. See L.J. Sharpe, 'Decentralist Trends in Western Democracies' in Sharpe (ed) Decentralist trends in Western Democracies, 9-80, p. 39.
72. Hoffmann, Le Mouvement Poujade, pp. 389-90.

64. L'Exploitant Familial, January 1969.
65. Grémion and Worms, Les Institutions Régionales et la Société Locale, p. 249
66. Grémion and Worms, Les Institutions Régionales et la Société Locale, pp. 203-210.
67. Grémion and Worms, Les Institutions Régionales et la Société Locale, p. 248. See also V. Wright, 'Regionalization under the French Fifth Republic', in L.J. Sharpe (ed) Decentralist Trends in Western Democracies, (London, Sage, 1979), 193-234, p. 212.
68. See P. Gourevitch, 'Reforming the Napoleonic State: The Creation of Regional Governments in France and Italy', in S. Tarrow, P. Katzenstein, and L. Graziano (eds), Territorial Politics in Industrial Nations, (New York, Praeger, 1978), 28-63, p. 42.
69. L'Exploitant Familial, April 1969.
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71. See L.J. Sharpe, 'Decentralist Trends in Western Democracies' in Sharpe (ed) Decentralist trends in Western Democracies, 9-80, p. 39.
72. Hoffmann, Le Mouvement Poujade, pp. 389-90.

73. Hoffmann, Le Mouvement Poujade, pp. 234-236.
74. Hoffmann, Le Mouvement Poujade, p. 210.
75. See Le Monde-Dimanche, 4 April 1982.
76. Rapport moral, 6th Congress, Montreuil, February 1982. A point worth noting is that Edith Cresson and her deputy Andre Cellard were conspicuous by their absence.
77. Rapport moral, 6th Congress, Montreuil, February 1982.
78. Rapport moral, 6th Congress, Montreuil, February 1982.
79. Rapport moral, 6th Congress, Montreuil, February 1982.
80. See ch. 5
81. Rapport moral, 6th Congress, Montreuil, February 1982.
82. See Le Monde, 18 August 1981 for interview with Jean Huillet.  
"J'ai voulu être le premier à vider les camions pour que les poujadistes ne passent pas devant".
83. P. Schmitter, 'Still the Century of Corporatism' in P. Schmitter and G. Lehmbruch (eds) Trends Towards Corporatist Intermediation, (London, Sage, 1979), 7-52, p. 13.

84. D. Strinati, 'Capitalism, The State and Industrial Relations' in C. Crouch (ed) State and Economy in Contemporary Capitalism, (London, Croom Helm, 1979) 199-227, p. 217. It is doubtful whether writers such as Lehmbruch make a sufficient distinction between corporatism as an ideal type and corporatism as their type of ideal.
  
85. G. Lehmbruch, 'Neo-Corporatism in Comparative Perspective' in P. Schmitter and G. Lehmbruch (eds), Patterns of Corporatist Policy-Making, (London, Sage, 1982), 1-28, pp. 22-23
  
86. See P. Schmitter, 'Reflections on where the Theory of Neo-Corporatism has Gone and where the Praxis may be Going', in Schmitter and Lehmbruch, Patterns of Corporatist Policy-Making, 259-280, p. 265
  
87. Crouch, Introduction to Crouch (ed) State and Economy in Contemporary Capitalism, p. 46.
  
88. L. Panitch, 'The Development of Corporatism in Liberal Democracies' in Schmitter and Lehmbruch (eds), Trends Towards Corporatist Intermediation, 119-148, p. 140.
  
89. L. Panitch, 'Recent Theorizations of Corporatism: Reflections on a Growth Industry', British Journal of Sociology, 31 (1980), 159-187. See particularly pp. 172-173.
  
90. R. Bagès, 'Le Syndicalisme Agricole et les Paysans du Sud-Ouest' in Tavernier et al, L'Univers Politique des Paysans dans la France Contemporaine, 445-466, pp.454-55. Burguiere, Bretons de Plozévet,

argues that the Plozévet farmers hostile to the FDSEA were motivated by "un vieux reflexe anti-bureaucratique qui trouvait enfin un bon prétexte pour mettre dans le même sac les représentants de l'Administration et les responsables du syndicat". Burguiere is guilty of a high degree of intellectual arrogance. He fails even to consider that they could have been right. See p. 192.

91. Lehmbruch, 'Neo-Corporatism in Comparative Perspective', p. 14
92. See L. Panitch, 'Trade Unions and the State' New Left Review 125 (1981), 21-44, p. 25 for a description of this attitude.
93. See B. Crick, In Defence of Politics, (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1964) for a defence of this view.
94. Schmitter, 'Still the Century of Corporatism', p. 24.
95. See Offe, 'The Theory of the Capitalist State', p. 126
96. See Watson, 'The Character and Contradictions of Western Style Planning', p. 47.
97. Panitch, 'Trade Unions and the State'. See also Schmitter, 'Reflections on where the Theory of Neo-Corporatism has Gone and where the Praxis May be Going', p. 277.

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